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"My kingdom is not of this world." "The kingdom of heaven is like unto  
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liberty."—*Words of the Apostle Paul.*

"En Jésus Christ toutes les contradictions sont accordées."—*Pascal.*  
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VOLUME FIRST.

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1853.







## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

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THE translator deems it proper to state, that his labours on NEANDER began, and were prosecuted to the completion of several successive volumes or parts of the present work, many years ago—though not before a partial translation of the same work had already appeared in England.

He has certainly no reason to regret, but rather much reason to congratulate himself, that his first translation did not find its way to the press. In 1843 Dr. NEANDER sent forth a second edition of the first volume of his work, embracing the history of the church in the first three centuries. In this new edition the alterations are numerous and important. The great features of the original work, its method and spirit, are indeed faithfully preserved; but, in other respects, there are very decided improvements.

These important changes, occurring not here and there, but through entire pages and paragraphs, have made it necessary to translate nearly the whole of the first volume anew. The translator has submitted to this labour with the more cheerfulness, as it enables him to present the work to the English reader in the form in which Dr. NEANDER has been pleased to express his wish that it should appear.

It has been, throughout, the translator's aim and effort to render a faithful version of the original. He has never felt himself at liberty, on any account whatever, to add anything to the text, or to omit anything from it. He has never resorted to notes for the purpose of explaining anything which could be made sufficiently plain in the place where it stood. On the extreme difficulty of giving an exact transcript in



English of an author's language, so exceedingly idiomatic, so thoroughly German in all his habits of thought and modes of expression as the author of this History, he need not enlarge. If allowance be made for the slight but necessary modifications which for this reason have sometimes been resorted to, the translator believes it will be found, that as he has clearly conceived his author's meaning, so he has faithfully expressed it in some form of English that can be understood.

In conclusion, he would take this occasion to express his grateful acknowledgments to all those friends who have encouraged and assisted him in the execution of his task ; and in a very particular manner to the Rev. JOSEPH TRACY, whose consent to overlook the proof-sheets before they came under the translator's final revision was an act of real kindness, which will not by him be very easily forgotten



## DEDICATION OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

## TO F. VON SCHELLING, THE PHILOSOPHER.

As the first volume of my Church History is about to make its appearance in a better shape, I feel constrained to take this opportunity of presenting you a testimony of my sincere respect and love, and my hearty thanks for all the instruction and excitement to thought derived from what you have said, both publicly and in the intercourse of private life, and for all you have done, during your residence here, in the service of our common holy cause. When I dedicate a work of this character to a philosopher like you, I know that it is nothing foreign from *your* philosophy; for that takes history for its point of departure, and would teach us to understand it according to its inward essence. In striving to apprehend the history of the church, not as a mere juxtaposition of outward facts, but as a development proceeding from within, and presenting an image and reflex of internal history, I trust that I am serving a spirit which may claim some relationship to your philosophy, however feeble the powers with which it may be done. In what you publicly expressed respecting the *stadia* in the development of the Christian church, how much there was which struck in harmony with my own views! I might feel some hesitation in laying before a man of your classical attainments, such a master of form as well as of matter, a work of whose defects, when compared with the idea at its foundation, no one can be more conscious than its author. But I know, too, that fellowship of spirit and feeling will be accounted of more worth by you than all else besides.

Trusting, then, that you will accept this offering in the same spirit with which it is presented, I conclude with the sincerest wishes that a gracious God may long preserve you in health, and the full enjoyment of your powers; that he would make you wholly our own, and long keep you in the midst of us, to awaken the *ἔπος πτεροφύτων* in the minds of our beloved German youth; to exert your powerful influence against all debasement and crippling of the intellect; to lead back those who are astray, from the unnatural and the distorted to a healthful simplicity; to exhibit a pattern of right method and of true freedom in science; to testify of that which constitutes the goal and central point of all history; and—so far as it comes within the province of science—to prepare the way for that new, *Christian* age of the world, whose dawn already greets us from afar; that for such ends as these He would prolong the evening of your life, and make it even more glorious than was its morning.

These are the sincere and fervent wishes of him who calls himself,  
with his whole heart,

Yours,

A. NEANDER.

Berlin, July 11, 1842.



## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

To exhibit the history of the Church of Christ, as a living witness of the divine power of Christianity ; as a school of Christian experience ; a voice, sounding through the ages, of instruction, of doctrine, and of reproof, for all who are disposed to listen ; this, from the earliest period, has been the leading aim of my life and studies. At the same time, I was always impressed with the magnitude of the undertaking, and with the great difficulties which must attend it, if so conducted as to answer the demands of science and of the great practical want which I have mentioned ; for both of these are, in the present case, closely connected. Nothing but what can stand as truth before the scrutiny of genuine, unprejudiced science,—of a science which does not see through the glass of a particular philosophical or dogmatic school,—can be profitable for instruction, doctrine, and reproof ; and wherever a science relating to the things of God and their revelation and evolution among mankind has not become, by mismanagement of human perversity, an insignificant caricature, or a lifeless skeleton, it must necessarily bear these fruits. Science and life are here designed to inter-penetrate each other, if life is not to be exposed to the manifold contradictions of error, and science to death and inanity.

Although I certainly felt the inward call to such an undertaking, yet the sense of its weight and its responsibility—especially at the present time, which so much needs the *historium vitæ magistrum*, as a sure compass in the storm and tumult of events—has continually deterred me from attempting to realize the favourite idea which so long floated before my mind. After several preliminary essays, on works connected with church history, I was led by various motives, personal and outward, to engage in a task which, if too long delayed, might never be accomplished.

The immediate outward occasion was, that my respected publisher invited me to prepare for the press a new edition of my work on the Emperor Julian ; and, at the same time, a more full and ample treatment of the subject, which in that work had been only a fragment. But in setting about this task, I found that the book, according to the views which I then entertained, would have to take an entirely new shape, and, if it came to anything, to be wrought into a far more comprehensive whole. Thus was suggested to me the thought of publishing, in the first place, the history of the church in the three first centuries as the starting point of a general Church History ; and the encouragement received from my publisher confirmed me in the plan.



I here enter, then, upon the execution of this work, and present to the public the first great division of the history of the church during the three first centuries. The second division, if it please God, shall follow by the next Easter fair. The history of the Apostolic church as a whole, is, to my own mind, of so much importance, that I could not prevail on myself to incorporate it immediately with the present history. Hence, in this work, I have simply presupposed it; and I reserve for a future opportunity the publication of it, as a separate work by itself.

May He who is the fountain of all goodness and truth attend the commencement of this work with His blessing, and grant me both the ability and the right disposition to prosecute it to the end.

To conclude, I offer my hearty thanks to all the friends who have attended this work, in its transition through the press, with their kind assistance; and especially to my excellent friend, one of our promising young theologians, (soon afterwards removed to a better world,) the theological student SINGER. To his assiduity and care, accompanied with no small labour in correcting the proofs, the appearance of this volume is greatly indebted. The indexes referring to the matter of the work, which, it is hoped, will contribute much to the reader's convenience, are also due to the industry of this valued and beloved friend.

A. NEANDER.

*Berlin, October 18, 1825.*

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## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

FIRST of all, I would thankfully acknowledge the Divine goodness which has enabled me — beyond any expectations I could have formed, when, seventeen years ago, I commenced the publication of my Church History — to prosecute the work so far, and also to recast the first volume of it in a better shape. The first edition having been disposed of within a year, a re-impression of the text and doubling the number of copies made it possible to defer the preparation of a new edition for so long a period. For this I am indebted to the prudent arrangement of my respected publisher; for had I undertaken to prepare a new edition at any earlier period, it would hardly have been in my power to carry forward the work so far as I have. Besides, owing to the long interval which has elapsed, I had become almost a stranger to this portion of it, in its original form; and hence the defects which demanded correction could not fail to appear to me the more glaring. Many of the cor-



reactions have been suggested by the remarks of friends and of enemies; and I trust I shall ever be glad to listen also to the latter, when the truth speaks through them.

I must still hold fast to the same fundamental position in theology, and in the contemplation of history, which I held at the outset of my undertaking. I must strenuously defend it, over against, and in opposition to, the same main tendencies which I then had to combat. On many points, history, in the mean time, has already decided. Nothing will remain hidden: principles must unfold themselves, and bring out to the light the results which lie within them. When this has been done, all the shifts are in vain by which men would seek to reverse the decision of history, and repeat over again the old trick of deception.

When, at the commencement of my labours, seventeen years ago, I dedicated my work to the friend who was about to leave me, WILHELM BÖHMER,—a young man whom I looked upon as the representative of a whole class inspired with the same disposition; who has since, as a man, maintained his standing among the learned theologians and teachers of the church, and with whom I have ever remained bound by the same fellowship of spirit,—I affixed to it the motto of our common theology, and of this exhibition of history: “*Pectus est, quod theologum facit.*” We need not be ashamed of this maxim; shame rather to those who were bold enough to ridicule it. They have pronounced sentence on themselves. It was the watchword of those men who called forth theology from the dead forms of scholasticism to the living spirit of God’s word. So let this be our motto still, in despite of all starveling or over-crammed *Philisters*,—of all the foolish men who wrap themselves in the conceit of their own superior science, or who allow themselves to be dazzled by such vain pretensions.

The first division of this work, in its present altered shape, will occupy two volumes. The second volume, with the Divine permission, will soon follow the present; and I hope, also, the continuation of the whole work will no longer be delayed.

*Berlin, July 11, 1842.*

A. NEANDER.

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DEDICATION OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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TO MY BELOVED AND MUCH-HONOURED FRIEND,

DR. HEUBNER,

SUPERINTENDENT-GENERAL AT WITTENBERG,

THE THEOLOGUS NON GLORIÆ SED CRUCIS.

WHEN, last year, the noble festival was held in commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of your Theological Seminary, from which, during that space of time, so rich a blessing has flowed to the churches of this country, gladly would I have borne some part or other in honour of this occasion, so interesting to my heart. It was not my happiness to enjoy that privilege. I now come after the feast, with a small offering, which assures you of my sincere love and respect. There is also a jubilee-festival in commemoration of our ancient friendship. It is now *more* than five and twenty years since it was my happiness to make your acquaintance, in the society of that man of God, who but a short time ago was called home from the midst of us, BARON VON KOTTWITZ, a man whose memory thousands bless,—and from that time I have looked towards you as to a point of light amid the darkness of this worldly age. You will receive this tribute of my sincere esteem with indulgent good-will. If you find a good deal here, as in other writings of mine, which does not accord with your own views of doctrine, this, I am confident, cannot disturb your kind feelings. You understand how to make subordinate differences recede and give place to the higher fellowship grounded on that one foundation, which is Christ. You are a disciple of the true spirit of love and freedom, which, so far from insisting that everything shall be cast in the same mould, maketh free.

God grant that you may be spared yet many years, as a blessing to his church, which, in these times of encroaching darkness, needs such witnesses above all things else.

With all my heart, yours,

A. NEANDER.

*Berlin, June 28, 1843.*

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND VOLUME.

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THE following is that part of the first book of my Church History which contains the history of doctrines. The active investigations which have been going on, during the few years past, in this department, gave occasion, here especially, for the correction or more ample proof of many things which I had advanced; and I am rejoiced that the opportunity has been given me for making these improvements. A tendency which aims at science and spirit by referring everything to the head, could, most assuredly, never find in me any thing but an unfashionable opponent.

In conclusion, I present my hearty thanks to my friend, HERMANN ROSSEL, for the patient and skilful care which he has bestowed on the correction of this volume, and in preparing the running-titles, and the indexes at the end.

The two prefaces to the second and third volumes of the first edition I leave out for want of room. The third volume was dedicated to the beloved man with whom, as a colleague, I have since had the pleasure of being permanently connected, and was meant as a salutation of hearty love on the occasion of his then recent arrival on a visit to this city, July 19th, 1827.

The guide to Church History, which I promised some time ago, will now beyond all doubt be prepared by a very dear young friend of mine, Hr. LIC. JACOBI, who has already made himself favourably known by his essay on Pelagius, and from whom the best which could be done may be expected.

A. NEANDER.

*Berlin, June 23, 1843.*

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## M E M O I R

OF THE

## LIFE AND WRITINGS OF DR. NEANDER.

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JOHANN AUGUST WILHELM NEANDER was one of that circle of illustrious names by which the nineteenth century has been so forcibly reminded of the native majesty, the princely power and splendour of the Hebrew intellect, when developed and applied under right influences and towards worthy objects. He was the son of very poor Jewish parents, and was born at Göttingen on the 10th of January, 1789. The greater part of his youth was spent in Hamburgh, where he studied at the Gymnasium and the Johanneum. In 1806, when about seventeen years of age, having made a public profession of his adherence to the Christian faith, and been baptized, he went to Halle, and devoted himself to the study of theology, under Schleiermacher, who was at that time professor there. He finished his academical career at Göttingen, under the venerable Planck; and it was here that he was especially led to those original investigations into the sources of Christian history, which constituted the great work of his life. After completing his course, he returned to Hamburgh for a short period. In 1811 he took up his residence at Heidelberg, as a private tutor in the university there; and in 1812 he was made extraordinary Professor of Theology. The same year, however, he received and accepted a call to the newly-organized University of Berlin; and there he remained until the day of his death, his influence and reputation advancing year by year, until they may be said to have extended over the greater part of the Christian world.

His zeal in the discharge of his professorial duties at Berlin was intense. He frequently gave, on a single day, three con-

ssecutive lectures upon different subjects. He passed from history to doctrine, from doctrine to morals, from morals to sacred criticism or homiletics, apparently without fatigue or effort. His comprehensive mind embraced the whole domain of theology, and in his treatment of every branch of this extensive subject, he showed himself an erudite scholar, a good logician, a profound and original thinker, and an eloquent orator. One who knew him well thus writes of him:—"It can hardly be necessary to expatiate on his merits in connection with that department of Theology which is commonly called Historical; embracing all that relates to the History of the Christian *life*, of Christian *doctrine*, and of the *organization* of both, in and by the Church. His possession of a real *genius* for this class of studies was made evident at an early period of his career. His expositions of the New Testament are deservedly valued. He seemed to possess that variety of mental endowment, and that universality of sympathy, which enabled him to seize, almost intuitively, the meaning of writers differing as widely as Paul and James, as Peter and John. A greater difference of opinion prevails as to the value of his Lectures on Doctrinal (Systematic) Theology, comprising Dogmatics and Ethics. Abstract scientific classification can hardly be said to have been Neander's *forte*. No man, perhaps, ever had a clearer insight into the mutual relation of historic facts, into the real worth and significance of historic phenomena: but his grouping and arrangement on the whole seem to be determined by some inward and subjective, rather than by an objective and universally recognizable principle. Perhaps the massiveness and extent of the materials with which Neander was accustomed to deal, may have something to do with the production of the effect referred to. The results of his art are not Grecian temples, so finished, so symmetrical, so faultless in design and detail, that one can but sit down, as it were, and get them all by heart; but vast, grand, glorious structures of a Titan, not appealing strongly to the sense of *beauty*, because they express a purity which we cannot comprehend,—yet having so much of *reality* and of *sublimity*, that we cannot suggest a change which would not spoil them; or labyrinths endless, in which we *feel* that we are under the safe conduct of a trusty and experienced guide; or (and this perhaps most of all) faithful, transparent reproductions of the living variety which meets us



in actual history. Another reason for the absence of such a roundness and finish as mark the productions of the expert systematizer, may perhaps be traceable in that profound sense of the *fragmentariness* of all human knowledge, that intellectual modesty and humility by which Neander was so strongly characterised, and which, existing as it did in conjunction with talent and erudition, either of them *alone* almost sufficient to make a great man, furnishes an emphatic reproof to such as think that grandiloquence and assumption are the very essence of an honourable standing and a high renown."\*

The personal character of Neander has often been a theme of praise; but we question whether any have said of it more than the reality itself would have justified and confirmed. Untiring industry, a sagacity, within certain limits almost prophetic, a humble, ardent, life-pervading, rejoicing spirit of godliness, child-like simplicity, self-denying benevolence, a heart glowing and capacious enough for all the requirements of Christian friendship, but delighting especially to pour out its rich treasures of instruction and of sympathy upon the receptive souls of the young—these were the chief and strongly marked features of Neander's character. Eccentric we must admit him to have been, almost beyond the power of tongue or pen or pencil to describe; but even this eccentricity was so absolutely remote from anything like affectation,—so completely and manifestly a part of his individuality,—that after the first impression of singularity had somewhat subsided, it ceased to strike as being at all out of place, and in the minds of all such as really knew the man, and that which was in him, was certainly not associated with anything like disrespect or ridicule.

Neander's charity was unbounded. Poor students were not only presented with tickets to his lectures, but were also often provided by him with money and clothing. A very small portion of his income as a professor went to supply his own wants; it was nearly all given away for benevolent purposes. The profits resulting from the sale of his writings were bestowed upon Missionary, Bible, and other Societies, and upon hospitals. Thoughts of himself never seemed to have obtruded upon his mind. He would sometimes give away to

\* Biblical Review, vol. vi., pp. 56-7. We have altered the tense throughout.

a poor student all the money he had about him at the moment, and he has even been known frequently to bestow his new clothes in charity, while he retained the old ones for himself. At Berlin he was, if possible, less esteemed for his learning than for his piety and benevolence. His students loved him as a father, and he was indeed a father to them. He used to assemble them once or twice a week in his house; and there he conversed with them familiarly, encouraging one, advising another, and distributing to all, with inexhaustible liberality, the stores of wisdom and erudition that he had amassed. His pleasure was to be with the young; and when a student showed uncommon aptitude for learning, he was always willing to devote a portion of his leisure time to his instruction. It would be difficult to decide whether the influence of his example has not been as great as that of his writings upon the thousands of young men who have been his pupils. Protestants, Romanists, nearly all the leading preachers throughout Germany, have attended his lectures, and all have been more or less imbued with his ideas and teachings.

Neander's love of Christianity was a living affection, dwelling in the present as truly and as actively as in the past. His faith remained firm and lively to the end. It was not a dry rationalism; it was not a vague latitudinarianism. He believed profoundly in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, the Redeemer and Saviour of the world, the only true Mediator between God and man. He admitted the supernatural facts of the Gospel,—the incarnation, expiation, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. But what distinguished him especially was a heart full of love and devotedness to his divine Redeemer. Too often learning dries up the heart, and the abstract speculations of theology stifle the warm emotions of the soul. But in this respect the great Berlin professor afforded a remarkable example. He was at once very learned and very fervent; he combined with the highest endowments of genius the simple faith of a child. His warm, generous heart, constantly overflowing with feelings of love to all mankind, saved him from those rocks against which so many of his most eminent contemporaries in his own nation have been dashed. It was a sad and singular sight to behold his former teacher Schleiermacher, a Christian by birth, inculcating in one lecture-room, with all the power of his mighty genius, those doctrines



which lead to the denial of the evangelical attributes of Jesus Christ; whilst in another, his pupil Neander, by birth a Jew, preached and taught salvation through faith in Christ, the Son of God, alone.

Neander was never married, but lived with his maiden sister, who watched over him with the most devoted affection. And indeed he stood in need of her constant vigilance; for he understood nothing, absolutely nothing of the simplest business of life, or of the commonest domestic affairs. So absorbed in thought was he continually, and so utterly inattentive to what was passing around him, that he would have forgotten to take his meals, if he had not been conducted to table every day by his sister. Although he had for years been in the habit of going from his house to the university, he did not know the way, and it was necessary for him to have some one to guide him whenever he left his study to take a walk, or to go to his lecture-room. Generally a student accompanied him to the university, and just before it was time for his lecture to close, his sister could always be seen on the opposite side of the street, waiting to conduct him home.

Of his qualities as a lecturer the writer whom we have already quoted speaks thus:—"It may be necessary to inform some of our readers, that though Neander was a doctor in theology, a superior councillor of consistory, and an examiner of candidates for the ministry, he was what may be termed a *lay* professor of theology. He never, I think, received ordination, although entitled to demand it; he certainly never attempted to preach. It was therefore only in the University lecture-room on ordinary, and in the Aula on extraordinary occasions, that an opportunity was presented of hearing him. The occupation of the lecture-room seemed to have become a necessary part of his daily life. The room which he occupied was the largest *auditorium* in the University, having seats, with desks, for about three hundred hearers. Here he lectured, usually, twice or thrice every day for three quarters of an hour at a time, with intervals of a quarter of an hour between. No one who saw and heard him thus engaged for the first time is likely soon to forget either that sight or that hearing. The students are assembled: a small, spare man, buttoned up in an old brown surtout, and having his trowsers tucked in at the tops of his boots, enters the room, holding a few papers in his hand, shuts

the door hastily, steps upon a small dais furnished with an elevated desk, and immediately commences talking in a calm, measured, abstracted manner, while he leans his forehead upon his left hand, and this upon the desk before him. The small, well-turned head, with its tangled mass of jet black hair—those shaggy, portentous eyebrows—those small but brilliant eyes, which seem anxious to shut out the earthly daylight, perhaps that they may dwell without hindrance upon the clearer light within—that southern complexion—those sensitive features—and the rising enthusiasm of that deep-toned voice—might well call forth expectation, if—But did ever mortal eyes behold such extraordinary attitudes—such unaccountable gesticulation—such reckless defiance of all fashionable ‘Guides to Elocution?’ Now playing with an old pen, and twisting it into every possible fashion—now scrutinizing every finger-nail in succession, with as much earnestness as if the lecture were written *there*—now standing on one leg, while the other performs a series of rapid and indescribable gyrations—and now again, groping after the black board that hangs against the wall behind him! Surely the man is possessed! Yea, verily; but not as thou wouldst insinuate. It were well that some of us too were possessed by the same powers that have mastered him. Think for a moment *of what* he is speaking! How shall one small body express, by any conceivable gesticulation, the spiritual throes, the mighty upheavings which precede or attend the conversion of a continent, the construction of a theology, the soul-birth of a reformer, the renovation of the Christian world? It is clearly a hopeless thing; and *he* at least will not make the attempt. Arms and legs are at liberty to become *dissecta membra* if they choose, so they will but refrain from impeding the *man* in the utterance of that clear, calm insight, and that strong conviction, which fill his soul to overflowing. Listen awhile; and if thou hast a heart for the noble, the good, the true—if the utterance of a faith as earnest as it is intelligent and discriminating has any power to awaken faith in thee—thou shalt hear the long-drawn ages of the Christian past *preaching* to thee by that voice, *Christ and him crucified*, the help and hope of humanity, in all the possible varieties of its constitution, development, and combination; in such a manner, too, that the message itself is its own best evidence, and the history of



Christianity becomes, at least for the moment, the most convincing apology for Christianity.”\*

Neander's literary activity was well defined as to its principle, object, and field. He knew what he was about, and chose the best method of reaching the end in view. The central labour of his life was his ‘General History of the Christian Religion and Church,’—one of the most admirable monuments of the theology of the nineteenth century. Although numberless works have already been published on the same subject, this is, in its sphere, as wholly original as that of Niebuhr on Roman History. The reason of this originality is, that he boldly went back to the primitive sources. He would not publish a history at second or third hand; but he pursued his researches as patiently and carefully as if he had had no predecessors. His work is therefore unrivalled. Unhappily he did not live to complete it. The volumes that he has published reach down to the middle of the fourteenth century. How greatly is it to be regretted that he was not spared to relate the acts and explain the doctrines of our glorious Reformation! Much might have been expected from him, and he would undoubtedly have shed much new light upon the history of this important period.

His ‘History of the Planting and Training of the Christian Church by the Apostles’ has been thus characterized:—“The chief value of this work lies in its constituting a historico-critical introduction to the latter half of the New Testament. It is not enough to say that the materials of it are almost exclusively derived from the book of Acts and the inspired epistles; these are hardly more its sources than its subject. And the great distinction of these volumes from the multitude of others which embrace the same subject consists partly in the direction which the author's mind has taken in illustrating it; partly in the mass of literary information which he has brought to bear upon it; partly in the masterly experience with which the illustration is conducted; and partly in the Christian spirit which informs the whole. We have characterized the work as historico-critical. It is such, not merely because it narrates the principal facts of primitive Christian history, and follows up this narrative with an elaborate ana-

\* Biblical Review, vol. vi., pp. 58-9.

lysis of apostolic doctrine, but because, being throughout historical in its subject, it is throughout critical in its manner. The doctrinal analysis is given to show historically what and how the apostles taught, not apologetically to justify their teaching; and the narrative of facts is everywhere invested with that light which criticism concentrates from a comprehensive knowledge of antiquity, and a successful perusal of human nature."

The 'Life of Christ' has, in part, a polemical origin and signification, in consequence of the previous publication of that marvellous dream-book which Strauss has composed under a similar title. At the time of the appearance of the latter work, the Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs consulted Neander's opinion as to the propriety of prohibiting its sale in Prussia. Neander, who at that time was reading lectures upon the life of Jesus, replied that, as his opinions were in direct opposition to those of Strauss, he would write a book in which he would endeavour to confute the dangerous views advocated by that author. He could not advise the prohibition of the work—it had already taken its place in the scientific world, and could only be put down by argument. "Our Saviour," said he, "needs not the assistance of man to maintain his Church upon earth." We need hardly say that Neander completely overthrew the anti-Christian doctrines of his opponent, and proved once more that orthodoxy need never fear to measure itself against rationalism.

Neander's other works are for the most part monographs, or studies of particular events or characters afterwards portrayed in his great work, such as his biographies of Julian the Apostate, St. Bernard, and St. Chrysostom, his Anti-Gnostikus, and his Development of the Gnostic System; Sketches, designed to make Church History conducive to general Christian edification;\* and Notices of contemporary individuals or occurrences, such as appeared to possess an extraordinary interest in connection with the state and prospects of the kingdom of God on earth. He has also contributed some valuable memoirs to the proceedings of the historico-philosophical class in the Berlin Royal Academy of Sciences: and his contributions to the religious periodicals of Germany were frequent.

\* His "Memorabilia from the History of the Christian Life," and his volume on the "Unity and Variety of the Christian Life," belong to this class.



On Monday, the 8th of July, 1850, he lectured as usual; on Monday, the 15th of the same month, at about two o'clock in the morning, his spirit departed. He was somewhat unwell on the 8th, but not so as to interfere with his duties at the University; in the evening, however, he became very ill. His malady was a disease of the bowels, and his sufferings were excruciating during the whole week. On Sunday morning, though a strongly medicated bath relieved him somewhat, his reason gave way. No sooner had he lost the command of his mind than he began to fancy that his duties called him to his lecture-room, and besought his physician for permission to go. Afterwards he called for the young man whom he had employed to read to him since the partial failure of his sight, and requested him to go on with the work he was reading the day before his illness began. Then he appeared to think himself in his lecture-room, and that he had delivered his usual lecture, and said, "I am weary: let us go home." After this his feeble eye caught sight of the books ranged round his room, and they brought to mind the meetings for the study of the New Testament and the Fathers of the Church, which he held weekly with the students in his own house. Imagining his class to be present, he spoke some time upon certain passages of the New Testament, and afterwards wandering into the early history of the Church, he dictated a page or two for the continuation of his *magnum opus*. After finishing this—it was towards the close of the day—he said gently, "I am weary; I must sleep. Good night." Being now easy—that fatal symptom—he fell asleep and breathed until about two o'clock on Monday morning, when, in that other and more solemn sense, he again fell asleep.

On the 17th of July his funeral took place. In the morning the students and professors of the Universities of Berlin and Halle, with a number of clergymen, relatives, and high officers of government, met at his house to hear the funeral discourse. This was pronounced by Dr. Friedrich Strauss, who for forty-five years had been an intimate friend of Neander. During the service, the body, not yet placed in the coffin, lay on the bed, covered with wreaths and flowers, and surrounded (as is the custom in Germany) with burning candles. At ten o'clock the procession was formed, and proceeded to the cemetery. Along the whole distance, nearly two miles, the sides

of the streets and the doors and windows of the houses were filled with an immense concourse of people who had come to look upon the solemn scene. The hearse was surrounded by students, many of them from Halle, carrying lighted candles, and in advance were borne the Bible and Greek Testament which had been constantly used by the deceased.

At the grave a choir of young men sang appropriate music, and Dr. Krummacher delivered an affecting address. It was a solemn sight to see the tears gushing from the eyes of those who had been the pupils and friends of Neander. Many were deeply moved, and well might they join with the world in mourning for one who has done more than any other person to keep pure the religion of Christ in Germany. After the benediction was pronounced, every one present, according to custom, went to the grave and threw into it a handful of earth, thus assisting in the burial. Slowly and in scattered groups the crowd dispersed to their various homes.

Neander, though dead, yet speaketh. He has gone from amongst us, but he still lives in his writings. His body has been consigned to the grave, but the sunset glory of his example still illumines our sky, and will for ever light us onward to the path he trod.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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CONDITION OF THE WORLD, ROMAN, GREEK, AND JEWISH, AT THE  
TIME OF THE FIRST APPEARANCE AND THE COMMENCEMENT  
OF THE SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY.

OUR purpose is to trace, through the course of past centuries, lying before us for review, the growth of that mighty tree which, springing up from the little grain of mustard-seed, is destined to overshadow the earth, and under the branches of which all nations are to find a safe lodging. The history will show how a little leaven, cast into the whole lump of humanity, has been gradually leavening it. Looking back on the period of eighteen centuries, we have to survey a process of development in which we ourselves are still involved; a process which, moving steadily onwards, not always indeed in a straight line, but through various windings, is yet in the end furthered by whatever attempts to arrest its advance; a process which, having its issue in eternity, constantly follows the same laws, so that in the past, as it unfolds itself to our view, we may see the germ of the future, which is yet to meet us. But while it is the contemplation of history that enables us to discern the moving powers as they are prepared in their secret laboratories, and as they exhibit themselves in actual operation, yet a right understanding of all this presupposes that we have formed some just conception of the inward essence of that which we would study in its manifestation and process of development. Our knowledge here falls into an inevitable circle. To understand history we must already possess some notion of that which constitutes its working principle; but it is also history itself that furnishes us the proper test by which to ascertain whether its principle has been rightly apprehended. Consequently our understanding of the history of Christianity will depend on the conception we have formed to ourselves of Christianity itself.

Now we look upon Christianity not as a power that has sprung up out of the hidden depths of man's nature, but as one which descended from above, when heaven opened itself anew to man's long alienated race; a power which, as both in its origin and its essence it is exalted above all that human nature can create out of its own resources, was designed to impart to that nature a new life, and to change it in its inmost principles. The prime source of this power is He whose life exhibits to us the manifestation of it—Jesus of Nazareth—the Redeemer of mankind when estranged from God by sin. In the devotion of faith in Him, and the appropriation of the truth which He revealed, consists the essence of Christianity, and of that fellowship of the divine life resulting from it which we designate by the name of the Church. By it is formed that consciousness of community which unites all its members in one, however divided from one another by space or time. The continuance of all those effects, whereby Christianity has given a new character to the life of our race, depends on our holding fast to this, its peculiar essence, the original cause of all these effects. To the Kingdom of God, which derived its origin from these influences on humanity, and from which alone it can ever continue to spring up, may be applied the remark of an ancient historian respecting the kingdoms of the world, that they are best preserved by the same means by which they were first founded.\*

But although Christianity cannot be understood except as something which, being above nature and reason, is communicated to them from a higher source, it stands nevertheless in necessary connection with the essence of these powers and with their mode of development. Otherwise, indeed, it would not be fitted to raise them to higher perfection, and in short would be unable to exercise any influence on them. And such a connection we must presume to exist absolutely among all the works of God, in whose mutual and harmonious agreement is manifested the divine order of the universe. This connection consists therein, that whatever has by their Creator been implanted in the essence of human nature and reason, whatever has its ground in their idea and their destination, can only attain to its full realization by means of that higher principle,

\* Imperium facile his artibus retinetur, quibus initio partum est.



such as we see it actually realized in Him who is its Source, and in whom is expressed the original type and model after which humanity has to strive. And accordingly we discover abundant evidence of this connection when we observe human nature and reason, and see how, by virtue of this their original capacity, they do, in their historical development, actually strive after this higher principle, which needs to be communicated to them in order to their own completion; and how by the same capacity they are made receptive of this principle, and are led onwards till they yield to it, and become moulded by its influence. It is simply because such a connection exists,—because in all cases where, by historical preparations, the soil has been rendered suitable for its reception, Christianity, entering readily into all that is human, strives to assimilate it to its own nature, and to imbue it with its own spirit—that, on a superficial view, Christianity itself appears to be only a result produced by the joint action of the several spiritual elements it had drawn together. And accordingly the *opinion* that it could *thus* be explained has found its advocates. And for the same reason Christianity may also be blended for a while with the impure elements which it attracts by its influence, and so in its temporary manifestation assume a shape which wholly resembles them: but at last, by its own intrinsic power, it begins a process of purification, from which it issues refined and ennobled even in its outward form. And this circumstance, again, might be made to furnish some hold for the *opinion* that all those impure elements, which only attached themselves to Christianity in its outward manifestation, sprang from its essence; whereas, in fact, the real tendency of its essence, as the process of development goes on, is to separate and reject them. In the contemplation of history, as well as of nature, it is in truth extremely difficult to avoid confounding accidental symptoms with more deep-seated agencies,—to distinguish clearly the true cause from what merely works on the surface.\*

If this holds good of the relation of Christianity to the development of human nature generally, it will be found to apply with peculiar force to that great period which was

\* We might apply here what the great historian Polybius says on another, though kindred, subject: 'Ἀρχὴ τί διαφέρει καὶ πόσον δίστηκιν αἰτίας καὶ προφάσεως. III. VI., 6.

chosen for the appearance of the Saviour of the world, and for diffusing among mankind, from Him, as their source, those heavenly principles which formed the commencement of that new creation, whose progressive development became forthwith the final problem and the goal of history. It is therefore only from its historical connection with the previous development of that portion of mankind among whom Christianity first appeared that its effects can be rightly understood; and such a connected view of the subject is necessary to guard against all false explanations.

Such a connection is hinted at by the Apostle Paul, when he says that Christ appeared *when the fulness of the time was come*. For these words clearly imply that the precise time when He appeared had some particular relation to His appearance;—that the preparations made by the previous development of the history of nations had been leading precisely to this point, and were destined to proceed just so far, in order to admit of this appearance—the goal and central point of all. It is true this appearance stands in a highly peculiar relation to the religion of the Hebrews, which was designed to prepare the way for it in an eminently peculiar sense. It is connected with this religion by the common element of a divine revelation—of a super-natural and supra-rational element; by the common interest of Theism and the Theocracy. For all revealed religion, the whole development of Theism and the Theocracy, points from the beginning towards one end. And this being once reached, every part must be recognised as belonging to one organic whole—a whole wherein all the principal *momenta* served to announce beforehand, and to prepare the way for, the end towards which they were tending as their last fulfilment and consummation. It is in this point of view that Christ was able to say of his relation to the Jewish religion, what in the same sense he could not say with respect to any other—that he was not come to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil; although it is at the same time true that the character of one who came not to destroy but to fulfil best describes the position of Christ relatively to whatever of truth lay at the bottom of all religions, and in short to all that is pure in humanity. But still we must not here confine ourselves exclusively to the connection between Christianity and Judaism. Judaism itself, as the revealed



religion of Theism, cannot be understood in its true significance, except as contrasted with paganism as the religion of Nature. Whilst, on the one hand, the seed of divine truth out of which Christianity sprang was communicated to reason by divine revelation; so, on the other hand, reason, unfolding itself from beneath, had to learn by experience, especially among that great historical people the Greeks, how far singly, and by its own power, it could advance in the knowledge of divine things. To this the Apostle Paul alludes when he says, "God hath determined for all nations the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation, that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him and find him." And so, too, when he says of the times immediately preceding the revelation of the gospel, that the world, by its own wisdom, sought to know God in his wisdom, but could not know him. As the duty had been laid on the Hebrews to preserve and transmit the heaven-derived element of the Theistic religion, so it was ordained that among the Greeks all seeds of *human culture* should expand in beautiful harmony to a complete and perfect whole. Then Christianity, removing the opposition between the divine and the human, came to unite both in one, and to show how it was necessary that both should coöperate in preparing for its own appearance and for the unfolding of all that it contains. Origen therefore did not hesitate to admit what Celsus, the great antagonist of Christianity, had maintained, when he ascribed to the Greeks a peculiar adaptation of talents and fitness of position, which qualified them for applying human culture to the development and elaboration of those elements of divine knowledge they had received from other quarters, and especially from the East.\*

Besides, among pagans, the transient flashes of a deeply-seated consciousness of God—the sporadic revelations of Him in Whom we live and move and have our being, and Who has not left himself without witness among any people—those *testimonia animæ naturaliter Christianæ*, (as it is expressed by an ancient father,) which pointed to Christianity, are too clear to be mistaken. And while it was necessary that the influence of Judaism should spread unto the heathen world, in

\* "Ὅτι κρῖναι βεβαιώσασθαι καὶ ἀσκῆσαι πρὸς ἀρετὴν τὰ ὑπὸ βαρβάρων εὐρεθέντα ἀμείνονές εἰσιν Ἕλληνες. Origen, acquiescing in this opinion, says it serves precisely for the vindication of Christianity. C. Cels. I. 2.

order to prepare the way and open a point of communication for Christianity, so was it needful also that the stern and repulsive rigidity of Judaism should be softened and expanded by the elements of Hellenic culture, in order to adapt it to embrace the new truths which the Gospel was to exhibit. The three great historical nations had, each in its own peculiar way, to coöperate in preparing the soil on which Christianity was to be planted,—the Jews on the side of the religious element; the Greeks on the side of science and art; the Romans, as masters of the world, on the side of the political element. When the fulness of the time was come, and Christ appeared,—when the goal of history had thus been reached,—then it was that through him, and by the power of the spirit that proceeded from him—by the might of Christianity,—all the threads of human development, which had hitherto been kept apart, were to be brought together and interwoven in one web.

We shall now proceed more particularly to consider the several courses of development by which revealed and natural religion alike,—Judaism on the one hand, and Greek or Roman institutions on the other,—coöperated in preparing the way for Christianity; and first of all let us cast a glance at the religious state of the pagan world among the Greeks and Romans.

*State of the Pagan World among the Greeks and Romans.*

If, in the ancient world, a dark fatality *seemed to reveal itself* in the rise and fall of nations, an irresistible cycle before which all human greatness must give place, still we may recognise therein the consciousness of a law of development necessary at that stage of the world. All national greatness depends on the tone of public feeling and manners: and this again on the influence which religion exerts on the life of the people. But the popular religions of antiquity answered only for a *certain stage* of culture. When, in the course of progress, a nation passed beyond this, an alienation of spirit from its religious traditions was a necessary consequence. In the case of the more quiet and equable development of the Oriental mind,—so tenacious of the old,—the opposition between the mythic religion of the people, and the secret, *theosophic* doctrines of a priestly caste, who gave direction to the popular conscience, might exist for centuries with-



out producing any change. But among the more excitable nations of the West, intellectual culture, as soon as it attained to a certain degree of independence, necessarily came into collision with the mythic religion which had been handed down from their infancy as a people. The more widely intelligence was diffused, the deeper became the discord. Religion was deprived of its power, and a revolt against its authority led at the same time to a depravation of morals. Thus a culture, devoid of all religious and moral grounds of support such as might be capable of withstanding every shock and indestructible under all changes, and torn from its connection with the inner life that alone gives the vigour of health to all human efforts, could not but degenerate into false civilization and corruption. There was as yet *no salt* to preserve the life of humanity from decomposing, or to restore to purity what was passing into decomposition.

As it was to the Grecian mind—freed in its development from the influence of tradition—that philosophy and all such sciences as are independent in form owe their existence; so too it was among the Greeks that the mighty schism first presented itself between the human mind in its pursuit of freedom and the popular religion. As early as the fifth and fourth centuries before Christ, the arbitrary and heartless dialectic of the Sophists was directed against the authority of holy tradition and of morals. Plato represents Socrates as protesting even in his days against this rage for enlightenment, and characterising it as a “boorish wisdom,”\* that put itself to the thankless task of tracing all mythical tales to some natural fact, neglecting meanwhile what is most important to and most concerning man, the knowledge of himself. And in the next generation arose a certain Euemerus, from the school of Cyrene, who fancied that he had compassed the long-sought object, by resolving the whole doctrine of the gods into a history of nature.

Among the Romans, more than any other ancient people, religion was closely interwoven with politics. The one gave life to the other. Here, more than elsewhere, the whole social and political body was based on religious customs, which, by

\* Ἀγροίκῳ τινὶ σοφίᾳ χρώμενος, is what he says of one of those enlighteners who were for explaining everything into the natural and trivial. Phædrus, p. 285, Plat. ed. Bipont, Vol. X.

their connection with modesty of manners, presented a striking contrast with the mythology of Greece,—a system whose elements were æsthetical rather than moral, and which did not shrink even from an open union with immorality.\* The great historian Polybius has given us a picture of Roman life, such as it was a century and a half before Christ, while it yet retained its ancient simplicity. Judging by those maxims of the understanding, which, as a statesman, he was in the habit of applying to the affairs of the world, he believed that that very trait which had been most commonly objected to in the Roman character,—an excessive superstition wrought into their whole public and private life,—was, in truth, the firmest pillar of the Roman state.† Contemplating religion in this outward way, he saw in it only a means, which the wisdom of lawgivers employed, for training and leading the multitude. “If it were possible,” he remarked, “to form a state of wise men, such a procedure would perhaps be found unnecessary. But as a counterpoise to the power which unruly passions and desires exercise over the excitable multitude, there is need of such contrivances to hold them in check by their fear of the invisible, and by such like tales of horror.”‡ By such a power of religious faith he accounted for the integrity and trustworthiness of the Roman magistrates, with whom an oath was a pledge of fidelity, to be relied on with far more confidence than any number of other securities in Grecian states. While, therefore, he praised the ancients, not without good reason, as having introduced among the multitude these opinions concerning the gods and the things of the lower world, he felt constrained to censure those of his contemporaries who were most unreasonably and inconsiderately seeking to destroy these convictions.§

It was a necessary result of the position occupied by the

\* A difference between the Roman and Grecian religions, particularly noticed by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, a Greek writer of the Augustan age. See the well-known and remarkable passage in *Archæol. Roman.* l. II. c. 18.

† Καὶ μοι δοκεῖ τὸ παρὰ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἀνθρώποις ὀνειδιζόμενον, ταῦτο συνέχεν τὰ Ῥωμαίων πράγματα, λέγω δὲ τὴν δεισδαιμονίαν. L. VI. c. 56.

‡ Αἰσίνεται, τοῖς ἀδύλοις φόβοις καὶ τῇ τοιαύτῃ τραγῳδίᾳ τὰ πλήθη συνέχεν.

§ Διότι οἱ παλαιοὶ δοκοῦσι μοι τὰς περὶ θεῶν ἐννοίας καὶ τὰς ὑπὲρ πάντων ἐν ἅδου διαλήψεις οὐκ εἰκῇ καὶ ὡς ἔτυχεν εἰς τὰ πλήθη παρεισαγαγεῖν· πολλὸν δὲ μᾶλλον οἱ νῦν εἰκῇ καὶ ἀλόγως ἐκβάλλειν αὐτά.



ancient world, that, in proportion as scientific culture came to be more generally diffused among the people, this opposition noticed by Polybius between the subjective conviction of individuals and the public religion of the state would become more strongly marked. It was impossible to establish on any grounds of truth a fellowship of religious interest between the cultivated class and the uneducated. The wiser sort endeavoured to maintain the popular religion; some, like Polybius, merely because they recognised in it a necessary means to political ends,—others, like philosophers of greater depth, because they regarded it as something more than the work of human caprice, and belonging to a higher necessity; as resting on a basis of truth, which could only be brought home to the minds of the multitude under this anthropomorphic shape;—as the fragments of a tradition, which transmitted the knowledge of divine things possessed in the earliest times, and in which all that was true, and that deserved to be acknowledged as such even by the wise, ought to be distinguished from the imperfect form.\* With Polybius agrees Strabo the geographer, who wrote in the age of Augustus Cæsar. “The multitude of women,” he observes, “and the entire mass of the common people, cannot be led to piety by the doctrines of philosophy; to effect this therefore superstition is necessary, which may call in the aid of myths and tales of wonder.” Having adduced some examples from Grecian mythology, he adds, “Such things the founders of states employed as bugbears to awe childish people.” These myths, as it seemed to him, were required not only for children, but also for the ignorant and uneducated, who are no better than children;

\* So Aristotle; who says, “It has been handed down in a mythical form, from the earliest times to posterity, that there are gods, and that the divine (the Deity) compasses entire nature. All besides this has been added, after the mythical style, for the purpose of persuading the multitude, and for the interest of the laws and the advantage of the state. Thus men have given to the gods human forms, and have even represented them under the figure of other beings, in the train of which fictions followed many more of the like sort. But if, from all this, we separate the original principle, and consider it alone, namely, that the first essences are gods, we shall find that this has been divinely said; and since it is probable that philosophy and the arts have been several times, so far as that is possible, found and lost, such doctrines may have been preserved to our times as the remains of ancient wisdom.” *Metaphys.* x. 8.

and even for those whose education is imperfect, for in their case too reason has not as yet acquired sufficient strength to throw off the habits they contracted in the years of childhood.\*

In the latter times of the Roman republic, when the ancient simplicity of manners was fast disappearing before the advance of intellectual culture, this opposition, (which had been long prevalent among the Greeks,) between the religion of thinking men and the state-religion or the popular faith, became more general in proportion to the growing influence of Grecian philosophy. Thus Varro, the learned Roman antiquarian, who lived about the time of our Saviour's birth, distinguished three kinds of theology—the poetic or mythical, the civil, and the natural; the last being the only one which belongs to the whole world, and in which the wise are agreed. The *theologia civilis*, in its relation to truth, lay, in his opinion, midway between mythology and philosophical religion.† Seneca too thus writes in his treatise 'Against Superstition:' "The whole of that vulgar crowd of gods, which for ages past a Protean superstition has been accumulating, we shall worship in *this* sense—so, viz., as never to forget that the worship we pay them is due rather to good manners than to their own worth. All such rites the sage will observe, because they are commanded by the laws, not because they are pleasing to the gods." So Cotta (whom Cicero introduces as the Academician in the third book of his work 'De natura Deorum') is able to distinguish, in his own person, the two different positions of the pontifex and the philosopher. But it was not every one that possessed the requisite wisdom to hold these two positions distinct, and to keep them from destroying where they had nothing better to offer in the place of that which they destroyed. The inner disunion was at length no longer to be concealed even from those who were *no philosophers*. When with the increase of luxury a superficial cultivation became common among the Romans, and the ancient simplicity of

\* In Strabo Geograph. l. I. c. 2.

† His words are: Prima theologia maxime accommodata est ad theatrum, secunda ad mundum, tertia ad urbem. Ea, quæ scribunt poetæ, minus esse, quam ut populi sequi debeant, quæ autem philosophi, *plus* quam ut ea vulgum scrutari expediat. Ea quæ facilius intra parietes in schola, quam extra in foro ferre possunt aures. Augustin. de civitate Dei. l. VI. c. 5 et seq.



manners gradually disappeared ; when the old civic virtue declined with the fall of the old constitution and freedom, and was succeeded by every species of moral depravity and abject servitude ; then was every tie broken which had previously bound up the religion of the state so closely and so intimately with the whole life of the people. Those among the philosophical systems of the Greeks, which most completely harmonized with a worldly, thoughtless spirit, and were devoid of all susceptibility for the godlike ; those which made pleasure man's highest end, or which led to a doubt of all objective truth,—Epicureanism, as represented, for example, by a Lucretius—and scepticism,—found welcome on all sides. And although the systems themselves were seldom studied, yet the great mass of half-educated men became familiar with their results. Individuals appeared who, like Lucian, pointed the shafts of their wit against the existing religion and the superstitions of the people. In the religious systems of the several nations which the Roman empire had brought into contact with one another, as well as in the doctrines of the philosophical schools, men saw nothing but a strife of opinions without a criterion of truth. The ejaculation of Pilate, "What is truth?"—in which he ridiculed all enthusiasm about such a matter—bespoke the sentiment of many a noble Roman.

Those who, without any deep sense of religious need, were yet unable to make up their minds to a total denial of religion, endeavoured to content themselves with that dread abstraction from the living forms of religion which as a sort of slough is usually thrown off by their fast expiring vitality,—a certain species of Deism,—a way of thinking that does not indeed absolutely deny the existence of a Deity, but yet places him at the utmost possible distance and in the farthest background. An idle deity is all that they want ; not one everywhere active and with living influence pervading the whole system of things. To men of this way of thinking, he who to satisfy his religious wants looks for something beyond this meagre abstraction—he who longs to know something more of man's relation to a higher world—appears a fanatic or a fool. The inquiries that a profounder feeling of religious need suggests are perfectly unintelligible to such minds ; for they are strangers to the feeling itself. In the notions entertained by the many concerning the anger of the gods, and the punishments of

the lower world, they can see nothing but superstition, and are unable to recognise in them a fundamental truth, and an undeniable need of human nature, which only when misunderstood leads men into delusion and error. But by minds of this stamp all alike is ridiculed as the mere dream and fancy of finite man, who transfers his own passions to his gods. A representative of this class is furnished by Lucian, that satirical castigatōr of manners in the age of the Antonines, who characterizes himself as the hater of lies, cheats, and charlatany.\* And of the philosophers in his time, Justin Martyr observes "that the greater part bestow no thought on the questions, whether there be one God, or whether there be many gods; whether there be a providence or not; as if knowledge of these matters were of no importance to our well-being. "They rather seek," he says, "to convince us also that the Divinity extends his care to the great whole and its several classes, but not to me and to you, not to men as individuals. Therefore, they teach, it is useless to pray to him, for all things recur according to the unchangeable laws of an endless progression."†

From this wreck of religion many sought to rescue a faith in one divine primal essence, which, however, they found it difficult to distinguish from the world. A simple spiritual worship of this essence appeared to be the original truth, which, in popular religions, lay at the foundation of the whole fabric of superstition. Thus Varro was of opinion that the only thing true in religion was the idea of a rational soul of the world, by which all things are moved and governed.‡ He traces the origin of superstition and unbelief to the introduction of idols, which he contends were unknown to the earliest religion of the Romans.§ "If," he says, "images had not been introduced, the gods would have been worshipped in chaster and simpler rites."|| In proof of this he appeals

\* Μισαλαζών εἰμι καὶ μισογότης καὶ μισοψευδὴς καὶ μισότυφος καὶ μισῶ πᾶν τὸ τοιούτῳδες εἶδος τῶν μιαιφάνων ἀνθρώπων· πάντες δὲ πολλοὶ εἰσιν. Which, to be sure, he could say, with perfect justice, of his own time. See the dialogue entitled ἀλκιεύς.

† Dial. c. Tryph. Jud. at the beginning f. 218, Ed. Colon. 1686.

‡ Anima motu ac ratione mundum gubernans.

§ Qui primi simulacra deorum populis posuerunt, eos civitatibus suis et metum demississe et errorem addidisse.

|| Castius Dii observarentur; see Augustin. de civ. Dei, l. V. c. 31.



to the example of the Jews. So, too, Strabo enlightens us as to what he himself considered to be the original truth of religion, when he describes Moses as a religious reformer, who established a simple and spiritual worship of a Supreme Being, in opposition to the idol and image worship of other nations; "and this one Supreme Essence," he says, "is that which embraces us all, the water, and the land,—that which we call the heavens, the world, the nature of things. This Highest Being should be worshipped, without any visible image, in sacred groves. In such retreats the devout should lay themselves down to sleep, and expect signs from God in dreams." But Strabo supposes that this simple nature-worship became afterwards, as well among the Jews as everywhere else, corrupted by superstition and thirst for power.\* We must here also mention that eclectic philosopher of the Cynic school, Demonax of the isle of Cyprus, who, at the beginning of the second century, resided in Athens, where he reached nearly the age of a hundred years, and lived universally respected for his simple life and extensive benevolence. He was the representative of a sober, practical bent of mind, which never looked beyond the purely human, and, while it discarded whatever savoured of superstition and fanaticism, checked all inquiry also about super-terrestrial things. He made no offerings, because the gods needed none. He had no desire to be initiated into the mysteries, for he thought "if they were bad they ought to be divulged, to keep men away from them; and if they were good, they should, from love to mankind, be communicated to all." When a show of gladiators was about to be exhibited in Athens, he presented himself before the assembled people, and told them they ought not to permit such a thing until they had first removed the altar of pity (ἔλεος). That equanimity which renders man independent of outward things and truly free, which enables him to fear nothing and to hope for nothing, he considered the highest excellence that man can attain to. When asked whether he thought the soul to be immortal, his answer was, "Yes, but in the sense in which all things are immortal."†

\* Strabo, l. XVI. c. 2.

† See the account of his life by Lucian. This remarkable mental bias of Demonax, so exclusively practical, moral, and *rationalistic*, so decided in its renunciation of all higher knowledge, so ready to spurn, as fanaticism, all speculative or religious interest about any other world

The elder Pliny, while absorbed in the contemplation of nature, is lost in admiration of an immeasurable creative spirit, who is beyond all human comprehension, and manifests himself in his works. But his admiration of this exalted spirit of the universe serves only to awaken, in tenfold strength, the depressing sense of the finiteness and vanity of man's nature. He saw nothing to fill up the chasm betwixt feeble man and that unknown, all-transcending spirit. Polytheism he regarded as the invention of human weakness. Since men were incapable of grasping and retaining the whole conception of perfect being, they separated it into many parts. They formed for themselves divers ideals as objects of worship; each making himself a god suited to his own peculiar wants. "All religion is the offspring of necessity, weakness, and fear. *What God is,—if in truth he be anything distinct from the world,—it is beyond the compass of man's understanding to know.* But it is a foolish delusion, springing from human weakness and pride, to imagine that such an infinite spirit would concern himself with the petty affairs of men.\* It is difficult to say whether it would not be better for men to be without religion altogether than to have one of this kind, which is a reproach to its object. The vanity of man, and his insatiable longing after existence, have led him also to dream of a life after death. A being full of contradictions, he is the most wretched of creatures; since no other has wants transcending the bounds of its nature. Man is full of desires and wants that reach to infinity, and can never be satisfied. His nature is a lie,—uniting the greatest poverty with the greatest pride. Among such great evils, the greatest good that God has bestowed on

besides or above the present, may be still further illustrated by several of his sentiments which have been preserved in the collection of Johannes Stobaeus. Thus, when asked if the world was animated, or of a spherical shape, he replied, "With much inconsistency you busy yourselves with the order of natural things, while you give no thought to the disorder in your own nature." The play on the words is not translatable into English. Ὅμως περὶ μὲν τοῦ κόσμου πολυπραγμονεῖτε, περὶ δὲ τῆς ἑαυτῶν ἀκοσμίας οὐ φροντίζετε. Stobaei Eclogæ, l. II. c. I. 11, ed. Heeren, P. II. p. 10. Two other sentences are contained in the Anthology of Stobaeus on the γνῶθι σεαυτόν and on ὑπεροψία, and in Orelli's Collection of the Gnomographi graeci.

\* Plin. Hist. Nat. l. II. c. 4 et seq.; l. VII. c. 1. Irridendum vero, agere curam rerum humanarum illud, quidquid est summum. Annetam tristi atque multiplici ministerio non pollui credamus dubitemusve?



man is the power of taking his own life." Sadness, mixed with a cold resignation, is the prevailing tone that runs through Pliny's admirable work. It was in this temper that he proceeded to encounter the flames of Vesuvius, for the purpose of exploring their effects.

But, as the history of this and of every age witnesses, there is an undeniable religious need which clings to human nature ; a need of recognising something above nature, and of fellowship with the same,—which only asserts itself the more forcibly the longer it is repressed. The predominance of that worldly bent of mind which will acknowledge nothing above nature does but call forth, in the end, a stronger reaction of the longing after the supernatural ; the prevalence of an all-denying unbelief invariably excites a more intense desire to be able to believe. And the experience itself, which infidelity invariably brings in its train, contributes to bring about this result. The times in which infidelity has prevailed are, as history teaches, uniformly times of calamity ; for the moral depravity which accompanies unbelief necessarily undermines, also, the foundations of earthly prosperity. Thus the period of the diffusion of infidelity in the Roman state also witnessed the destruction of civil liberty, and the prevalence of public suffering, under the rule of merciless despots. And outward distress awakened a sense of inward desolation ; men were led to regard their estrangement from the gods and from heaven as a principal cause of the public decay and misery. Many were driven to compare these times of public misfortune with the flourishing period of the Roman republic, and concluded this melancholy change ought to be ascribed chiefly to the decline of the *religio Romana*, once so scrupulously observed. In the gods, now cast off or neglected, they saw the founders and protectors of the Roman empire. They observed the mutual strife of the philosophical systems, which, promising truth, did but multiply uncertainty and doubt. All this excited a longing after some external authority, which might serve as a stay for religious conviction ; and they went back to the religion of their more fortunate ancestors, who, under the influence of that religion, found themselves so happy in the freedom from all doubt. That old religion appeared to them, like the days of the past, surrounded with a halo of glory. Such was the tone of feeling

which set in to oppose, first, the prevailing infidelity—afterwards, Christianity.

Thus, in the *apologetic* dialogue of Minucius Felix, the pagan Cæcilius describes, first of all, the strife and uncertainty of the systems of philosophy; shows how little reliance can be placed on human things generally; and points to the doubts in a providence which suggest themselves when we observe the misfortunes of the virtuous and the prosperity of the wicked. He then goes on to say, “How much nobler and better is it, then, to receive just what our fathers have taught us as a sufficient guide to truth! to worship the gods which we have been instructed by our fathers to reverence, even before we *could* have any true knowledge of them! to allow ourselves, in regard to the divinities, no licence of private judgment,—but to believe our ancestors, who, in the infancy of mankind, near the birth of the world, were even considered worthy of having the gods for their friends or for their kings!”

The need of some union with heaven, from which men felt they were estranged, the dissatisfaction with a cold, melancholy present, procured a more ready belief for the accounts which the mythical legends gave of a golden age wherein gods and men lived together in closest communion. Ardent spirits looked back to those times with a sort of earnest craving,—a craving after the past, that pointed to the future. Thus Pausanias\* endeavours to defend the old mythical traditions against the infidelity of his contemporaries; accounting for the latter partly from the fact that the true had been rendered suspicious by being mixed up with the false, and in part from the fact that men had grown accustomed to apply to that more glorious period of wonders a standard which suited none but the present times. Of those former days he says, “The men who lived then were, on account of their uprightness and piety, received as the guests and even table-companions of the gods; for their good actions the gods openly bestowed honours on them, and, for their bad, openly manifested displeasure. It was then, also, that men themselves became gods, an honour which they continue to enjoy.” But of his own time he says, “At the present day, when wickedness has reached its highest pitch, and has spread over the country and to every

\* In his Description of Greece. See *Arcadica*, or l. VIII. c. 2. s. 2.



town, no such an event occurs; and a man no longer becomes a god, except merely in name, and through flattery to power (the apotheosis of the emperors); and the anger of the gods awaits transgressors at a remote period, and after they are gone from this world." Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who, a few years before the birth of Christ, wrote a work on the early history of Rome, relates the story of a vestal virgin, whose innocence, after she had been falsely accused, was miraculously brought to light. Upon this he remarks, "The followers of atheistic philosophies,—if philosophies they may be called which scoff at all appearances of the gods that are said to have occurred among the Greeks or Barbarians,—would make themselves quite merry with these accounts, and ascribe them to human exaggeration; as if no one of the gods ever concerned himself about a man, whoever he might be; he, however, who is not disposed absolutely to deny that the gods do care for men, but believes that they regard the good with complacency and the bad with displeasure, will look upon these manifestations as not incredible."\*

The *artificial* faith in an old religion that had outlived itself must, on that very account, become fanatical in the absence of natural conviction, and will associate itself with passion. Hence the violence by which it was attempted to maintain the ever-waning course of paganism against the onward advance of Christianity. Although the Romans, accustomed to adhere to their old traditional forms and national peculiarities, were singularly averse to foreign modes of worship, yet this fundamental trait in the old Roman character had at this date become extinct with the majority. The ancient religion of Rome had lost its power over the minds of men, and they were inclined, therefore, to seek a prop for their religious faith in foreign modes of worship. Ceremonies that wore an air of enigma and mystery; strange-sounding magical formulas in some barbarous tongue (whereby, as Plutarch remarks, the national dignity of devotion was put to the blush),† found readiest admittance. As often happens in such cases, men were looking for some peculiar supernatural power in that which they did not understand, and which indeed was incapable of being understood.

\* Antiq. Roman. II. 68.

† 'Απόποις ὀνόμασι καὶ ῥήμασι βαρβαρικοῖς κατασχύνειν καὶ παρανοεῖν τὸ θεῖον καὶ πάτριον ἄξιωμα τῆς εὐσεβείας. De superst. c. 33.

Consequently this *artificial* faith was necessarily driven to assume the shape of superstition. Unbelief, against which an undeniable need of man's nature strongly asserted itself, called forth superstition,—since these two distempered conditions of the spiritual life are but opposite symptoms of the same fundamental evil, of which the one passes easily into the other. When once the inner life is become thoroughly worldly, it either suppresses all religious feeling, and abandons itself to infidelity ; or, blending itself with that feeling, gives to it an interpretation of its own, and thus turns it to superstition. The desperation of unbelief surrenders the troubled conscience a prey to superstition ; and the irrationality of superstition makes religion suspected by the thoughtful mind. Whenever we contemplate the period before us, we find such an opposition presenting itself under various forms. A man who was not in the habit of ridiculing, like Lucian, the absurd extravagances of superstition, but who was saddened by the contemplation of such cases of the denial or misapprehension of the Godlike,—the wise and devout Plutarch,—in a beautiful work of his, where he describes this opposition as it existed in his own time,\* presents us a picture, from the life, of such caricatures of religion. “ To the superstitious man every little evil is magnified by the scaring spectres of his anxiety.† He looks on himself as a man whom the gods hate and pursue with their anger. A far worse lot is before him ; he dares not employ any means of averting or of remedying the evil, lest he be found fighting against the gods. The physician, the consoling friend, are driven away. Leave me,—says the wretched man,—me, the impious, the accursed, hated of the gods, to suffer my punishment. He sits out of doors, wrapped in sackcloth or in filthy rags ; ever and anon he rolls himself, naked, in the dirt, confessing aloud this and that sin,”—and the nature of these sins is truly characteristic !—“ he has eaten or drunk something wrong,‡—he has gone some way or other which the divine being did not approve of. The festivals in honour of the gods give no pleasure to the superstitious,§ but they fill him rather with fear and affright. He proves, in his own case, the saying of Pythagoras to be false,—that we are happiest when we approach the gods,—for it is just then that

\* The tract *Περὶ δεισιδαιμονίας καὶ ἀθιότητος*.

† Comp. Coloss. 2, 16.

† Cap. 7.

§ Cap. 9.



he is most wretched. Temples and altars are places of refuge for the persecuted; but where all others find deliverance from their fears, there the superstitious man most fears and trembles. Asleep\* or awake, he is haunted alike by the spectres of his anxiety. Awake, he makes no use of his reason; and asleep, he enjoys no respite from his alarms. His reason always slumbers; his fears are always awake. Nowhere can he find an escape from his imaginary terrors." The contradictions involved in superstition are thus described:—"These men dread the gods, and fly to them for succour. They flatter them, and insult them. They pray to them, and complain of them."† The offensive phrases and gesticulations, the forms of self-abasement—so repulsive to the ancient feeling of freedom—into which the slavish spirit of superstition had fallen, were peculiarly revolting to the Greek and Roman sense of propriety.

In the work already quoted Plutarch delivers the following judgment on the connection between superstition and infidelity:‡—"The infidel believes not in the gods; the superstitious man would fain disbelieve, but believes against his will, for he fears to do otherwise. Yet as Tantalus wearies himself to escape the stone that hangs over him, so the superstitious man would gladly rid himself of the fear which is no trifling burden to him; and he is inclined to praise the unbeliever's state of mind, as freedom. But now, while the unbeliever has nothing in him of superstition, the superstitious man, on the other hand, is an unbeliever by inclination, but is too weak to think of the gods as he would wish to do.§ The unbeliever contributes nothing at all towards producing superstition; but the superstitious have, from the beginning, given occasion to unbelief, and, whenever it exists, furnish it with an apparent justification."||

Manifestly, Plutarch has here taken a very partial view of the religious phenomena of his times,—a natural mistake for one living in the midst of them, and who was biassed in his

\* Cap. 3.

† Cap. 5.

‡ Cap. 11.

§ In like manner, in another place, Plutarch says, that while, by the prevailing false notions of the gods, the weaker and more simple natures were led into a boundless superstition, acuter and bolder spirits were hurried into unbelief;—according to the different turn which is taken in the natural course of their development by the ἀσθενέσι καὶ ἀνάγκαις on the one hand, and the δεινοτέροις καὶ θρασυτέροις on the other. De Iside et Osiride, c. 71.

|| Cap. 12.

judgment by immediate impressions. It seems evident, from what has been already said, that the same cause which gives rise to superstition, lies also at the root of unbelief; and that infidelity, therefore, may easily change into superstition, as well as superstition into unbelief. Indeed, it was precisely the latter which, in this period of history, had called forth the former. Plutarch, moreover, has looked at these opposite tendencies under too general and abstract a point of view; he did not observe and take into his account those manifold gradations and transitions in the mutual relation of unbelief and superstition to each other, which in his own day he might have discerned. If there was at that time a superstition, leagued with immorality, which had its root in unbelief,—but an unbelief restrained by fear,—we also find, in the case of some who were really striving after moral worth, various modifications of superstition, which fundamentally had their root in the need—though not understood, and even misunderstood—of believing;—the need of a redemption from the deep-felt discord in their own nature. In order to lead such a need from superstition to faith, it was only necessary that the satisfaction unconsciously sought should be furnished to it. This was the point of religious development through which many were brought to embrace Christianity as the remedy for the evil they felt.

And while Plutarch, biassed as he manifestly was by the impression received from the revolting exhibitions of superstition, inclines, in the work above cited, to prefer unbelief to superstition; yet when he has occasion to attack an unbelief that denies everything, he owns there is a kind of superstition which he would prefer to infidelity. He says, for example, of Epicureanism, which boasted of having delivered men from the shadowy fears of superstition, “It is better to have a feeling of reverence mixed with fear, together with faith in the gods, than, for the purpose of avoiding that feeling, to leave one’s self neither hope nor joy, neither confidence in prosperity, nor in adversity access to the divine being.”\*

That profound sense of disunion, of disruption, which gave

\* Βέλτιον γὰρ, ἢνυπάρχειν τι καὶ συγκραεῖσθαι τῇ περὶ θεῶν δόξῃ κοινὸν αἰδοῦς καὶ φόβου πάθος, ἢ που τοῦτο φεύγοντας μὴτ' ἐλπίδα, μὴτε χαρὰν ἑαυτοῖς, μὴτε θάροςος ἀγαθῶν παρόντων, μὴτε τινὰ δυστυχούσιν ἀποστροφὴν πρὸς τὸ θεῶν ἀπολείπεισθαι. In the tract: *Non posse suaviter vivi secundum Epicurum*, c. 20.



birth to manifold kinds of superstition, revealed itself in those forms of mental disease which so widely prevailed, where the sufferers believed themselves to consist of two or more hostile natures—to be possessed or persecuted by evil spirits. It was through this ground-tone of the spiritual life that the system of Dualism, which came from the East, found means of introducing itself; and to this it owed its extraordinary influence in this age.

If now we glance at those directions of philosophical thought among the Greeks, which, in this period, found most general acceptance with men of earnest minds, two systems of philosophy will offer themselves particularly to our notice—the *Stoical* and the *Platonic*.

To begin with the *Stoical*: the old Roman character had felt itself peculiarly attracted by the moral heroism to which the principles of this philosophy led. To the noble pride of the Roman, which refused to survive his country's liberty, and in the self-sufficing consciousness of this resolve bade defiance to the corruption of the times, the doctrines of the stoical school were peculiarly welcome. In the freedom and independence of the sage, whose consciousness of an invincible mind within placed him above the power of fate, the Roman found a compensation for the loss of civil liberty. A natural relationship existed between Stoicism and a mind like Cato's. The wise man felt conscious of an entire equality, in moral elevation, with Jupiter himself. In his own mind he stood below him in no respect.\* He was master of his own life, and might take it whenever he found he could no longer live in a manner worthy of himself. On this principle many noble Romans acted, not only when they wished to escape from the ignominy of despotism, but also when disease cramped their powers and rendered existence insupportable.† Thus many a strong mind found in this philo-

\* See the words of Chrysippus: "Ὡς περ τῷ Διὶ προσήκει σιμνύνεσθαι ἐπ' αὐτῷ τε καὶ τῷ βίῳ καὶ μέγα φρονεῖν καὶ εἰ δεῖ οὕτως εἰπεῖν, ὑψαυχεῖν καὶ κορυφαῖν καὶ μεγαληγορεῖν, ἀξίων βιοῦντι μεγαληγορίας· οὕτω τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς πᾶσι ταῦτα προσήκει, κατ' οὐδὲν προειχομένοις ὑπὸ Διός. Plutarch. de Stoicorum repugnantiis, c. 13.

† For examples, cons. Pliny's Letters, I. 12, 22. III. 7. VI. 24. An old man of sixty-seven, lying under an incurable disease, dismissed his physician, who wished to force him to take nourishment against his will, with the word *κέρκινα*. Upon this Pliny remarks,—*Quæ vox, quantum admirationis in animo meo, tantum desiderii reliquit*. The following words of Pliny serve to give distinct form and expression to

sophy the expression for that which he carried in his own bosom; and to many it imparted a moral enthusiasm which enabled them to rise superior to the degeneracy of their contemporaries. But there were many who did nothing more than make an idle parade of the lofty maxims of the ancient philosophers, with whose statues or busts they embellished their halls, while their lives, abandoned to every vice, presented the strongest contrast with these noble models.\*

As to the relation which Stoicism held to the popular religion, it was the aim of the former, by an allegorical explanation, to bring the latter into harmony with a thoroughly pantheistic view of the world.† The Jupiter of Stoicism was not a being who governs all things with paternal love, and for whom each individual has a distinct end to fulfil. He was not one who, in his plans, reconciles the good of the whole with the good of the individual: on the contrary, he was a being who devours his own children—the Universal Spirit from which all individual existence has flowed, and into which, after certain periods, it is again resolved. The gods themselves were subject to the universal law of this eternal cycle, to which *every* individual existence must finally be sacrificed.‡ The law, or word of Zeus, providence, fate,§ all in this system signify the same thing—that unchangeable law of the universe, that immanent necessity of reason, which all must obey. Evil itself is necessary, according to this law, as being designed to be subservient to the manifestation of the harmony of the world, since without it there could be no good.|| The wise man calmly

the principle of the age, that left the decision of life and death to the *autonomy* of reason:—*Deliberare et causas mortis expendere utque suaserit ratio, vitæ mortisque consilium suscipere vel ponere, ingentis est animi.*

\* *Qui Curios simulant Bacchanalia vivunt,  
Indocti primum: quanquam plena omnia gypso  
Chrysippi invenies.*—Juvenal. *Satira II.*

† Lucian quotes, in the way of banter, the motto of the stoic pantheism: 'Ὁς καὶ ὁ θεὸς οὐκ ἐν οὐρανῷ ἐστίν, ἀλλὰ διὰ πάντων πεφοίτηκεν, οἷον ξύλων, καὶ λίθων, καὶ ζώων, ἄχρῃ καὶ τῶν ἀτιμοτάτων. *Hermotin. § 81.*

‡ As Chrysippus says in his work, *Περὶ προνοίας*,—Τὸν Δία αὐξίσθαι, μέχρις ἂν εἰς αὐτὸν ἅπαντα καταναλώσῃ. *Plutarch. de Stoicorum repugnantis, c. 39.*

§ Διὸς λόγος, προνοία, εἰμαρμένη.

|| Thus Chrysippus says, *Γίνεται καὶ αὐτὴ (ἡ κακία) πως κατὰ τὸν τῆς φύσεως λόγον καὶ ἢ οὕτως εἶπω, οὐκ ἀχρήτως γίνεται πρὸς τὰ ὅλα, οὔτε γὰρ τ' ἀγαθὰ ἦν.* *Plutarch. de Stoicor. repugnantis, c. 35.*



contemplates the game, and cheerfully surrenders his individual existence to the claims of the whole—to which every individual, as a part, must at once yield. The wise man has precisely the same divine life with Zeus, from whom his own has flowed. Calmly submissive, when the fated hour arrives he gives it back to its original source.

A cold resignation this, wholly at variance with man's natural feelings, and altogether different from the childlike submission of the Christian, which leaves inviolate every purely human feeling—a submission, not to an iron necessity that decrees annihilation, but to an eternal love which returns whatever is offered to it, transfigured and glorified. The emperor Marcus Aurelius says of this Stoical principle, "The man of disciplined mind will reverently say to Nature, who bestows all things, and resumes them again to herself, 'Give what thou wilt, and take what thou wilt.'" This he says in no haughty defiance of Nature, but in the spirit of cheerful obedience.\* His Stoicism, moreover, was tempered and refined by a certain childlike piety, a certain gentleness and unpretending simplicity of character. But with what grounds of comfort does he strive to still the craving implanted in man's nature after an imperishable personal existence? Let us hear what he says himself. "Two things we should consider: first, that, from all eternity, things are repeated after the same manner, and that it matters not whether one beholds the same thing again in one hundred or two hundred years, or in countless periods; next, that he who lives longest and he who dies soonest are equally losers, for each loses only that which he has the present moment." (II. 14.) "Ever keep in mind that whatever happens, and is yet to happen, has already been; it is merely the same show repeated." (10, 27.) "An action terminating at the allotted moment suffers no evil in that it has terminated; and he that did it suffers no evil in that he has ceased to act. So also the whole, consisting of the aggregate sum of actions, which is life, when it terminates at the allotted time has suffered no evil in that it has terminated; and he who, at the allotted time, has brought up the whole chain to the end, has lost nothing." (12, 23.) He asks (12, 5), "How happens it that the gods, who have

\* Monolog. 10, 14.

ordered all things well and in love to men, seem to overlook this one thing alone, that many very good men, who, by pious works and offerings, have stood on terms of intimate communion with the Deity, having once died, return no more to existence, but perish entirely?" He answers thus: "Although this is so, yet be assured, that if it ought to have been otherwise, the gods would have so ordered it. For had it been right, it would also have been possible; and had it been in harmony with nature, then nature would have allowed it. That it is not so, if it is not so, should satisfy us that it ought not to be so."

As Stoicism, by repressing a want inseparable from the essence of man's nature, tended, on the one hand, to awaken the longing after a revelation capable of satisfying this want; so, on the other hand, by unfolding in man the consciousness of his relationship to the divine—that truth which lies at the bottom of pantheism\*—by the idea, however pantheistically apprehended, of one original Divine Being, and of the spirituality of his worship, as confined to no particular place (which idea it opposed to the polytheistic religion of the people†)—it prepared the way for Christianity.

But a far greater, more deep-reaching, and more universal influence on the religious life of man's spirit than it was ever in the power of Stoicism to exert, was destined to proceed from the *Platonic* philosophy. It dates its beginning from that man who appears to us as the forerunner of a higher development of humanity, as the greatest man of the ancient world—one in whom the spirit of that world, going beyond itself, strove after a more glorious future,—from *Socrates*, whose

\* Thus, for instance, Paul, in his discourse at Athens, appeals to the testimony to such a consciousness given by the verse of Aratus; and much of a similar import is to be found in the hymn of Cleanthes, and in other outpourings of the Stoical muse. Compare the well-known passage in Seneca, *Non sunt ad cælum elevandæ manus nec exorandus ædituus, ut nos ad aures simulacri, quasi magis exaudiri possimus, admittat, prope est a te Deus, tecum est, intus est. Ita dico, sacer intra nos spiritus sedet.* Ep. 41 ad Lucil.

† Compare the passage from Seneca with the words of Zeno: "We should build no temple to the gods; for a temple is of little worth, and nothing holy,—a work of architects and common labourers is not worth much." Ἱερὰ θεῶν μὴ οἰκοδομεῖν· ἱερὸν γὰρ μὴ πολλοῦ ἄξιον καὶ ἅγιον οὐκ ἔστιν οἰκοδόμων δ' ἔργον καὶ βαναύσων οὐδὲν ἔστι πολλοῦ ἄξιον. Hence Plutarch reproaches the Stoics with self-contradiction, in participating in the religious rites of the temple. *Plut. de Stoicorum repugnantiis*, c. 6.



whole life seems invested in a mystery and riddle corresponding to his prophetic character. As in the first violent reaction of reason, when, having become altogether worldly, it turned against all religious and moral belief, it was his high vocation to oppose this worldly tendency and heartless dialectical caprice, which sought to subvert all higher interests, and, while he bore witness to the reality of that in which alone the spirit can find its true life, to awaken in men wholly immersed in earthly things that aspiration after the godlike which might lead them to Christ; so through his great disciple Plato,—who, with a truly original and creative mind, reproduced, in his philosophy, the image of Socrates, though not indeed in all the lofty simplicity of the man himself,—the influence of Socrates, working to the same end, has been often experienced in those great crises of man's history which were destined, by the dissolution of the old, to prepare the way for a new creation. As one who lived in a crisis of this sort has said,\* the Platonic Socrates, like John the Baptist, was a forerunner of Christ. This was preëminently true, so far as it relates to the first manifestation of Christ to the whole world.

The Platonic philosophy did not, like the Stoical, merely lead men to the conscious sense of a divine indwelling life, and of an immanent reason in the world, answering to the idea of the Stoical Zeus; but it led them to regard the divine as supramundane, as an unchangeable existence, transcending that which merely *becomes*; a supreme spirit, exalted above the world, if not as a *Creator* unconditionally *free*, yet at least as the *architect* of the universe. It awakened, also, a consciousness of the supernatural and divine, which in man is the efflux from this supreme Spirit, and of a kindred nature with it; so that man is thereby enabled to rise and have a fellowship with and a recognition of it. It did not, as the Stoical philosophy did when followed out to its legitimate consequences, represent the divine in man as a selfsubsistent element, an efflux from the divine source, which, as long as the form of personal manifestation lasted, could maintain an existence by itself—so that Zeus appeared to the wise man simply as the ideal of wisdom which he was to strive after: but it contemplated the divine in man as a ray which conducted him back to the primal light itself—merely as recipient faculty, which becomes

\* Marsiglio Ficino.

powerless so soon as it is separated from communion with the original source, from which alone it *can* receive strength.

Compared with the principle of ethical *self-sufficiency*—with that elevation of the feeling of self peculiar to the ancient world, and which appears to have reached its highest point in Stoicism—the Platonic system, as founded on that mode of view which we have just described, was distinguished by a tendency towards that which is most directly opposed to that principle, the Christian idea, viz., of humility. The word *ταπεινός*, which, according to the general sentiments of the ancient world, was employed, for the most part, in a bad sense, as indicating a slavish self-debasement,\* is to be met with in Plato and the Platonists as the designation of a pious, virtuous temper.†

This philosophy would have us recognise in man's personality, not a mere transitory appearance, but a something destined to higher development. The life of the individual was regarded by it not as an aimless sport in the periodical changes of the universe, but as a stage of purifying discipline and of preparation for a higher state of existence. It did not demand the *suppression* of any purely human want, but taught that the satisfaction of all such wants ought to be sought and waited for. It pointed to a higher stage of being, where the soul, disencumbered of its dross, would attain to the clear vision of truth.

Certainly it was in no sense the general drift and purpose of Plato to set up an abstract religion of reason, in opposition to the existing forms of worship; but he took his stand rather in opposition to that exclusive enlightenment of the understanding which was peculiar to the Sophists, and which merely analyses and destroys. His religious speculations rested on a basis altogether historical. He connected himself with the actual phenomena of religious life, and with the traditions lying before him; as we see in his remarks on the doctrine of

\* Even in Aristotle we find the *ταπεινόν* united with the *ἀνδραποδῶδες*. *Ethic. Eudem. III. 3.*

† To denote the disposition of submissiveness to the divine law of order in the universe, the word *ταπεινόν* is used in connection with *κεκοσμημένον*, and opposed to the impious spirit of self-exaltation. *De legibus*, IV. vol. VIII. ed. Bipont. p. 185; and Plutarch (*de sera numinis vindicta*, c. III.) says of the humiliation of the wicked brought about by punishment: *ἡ κακία μόλις ἂν γένοιτο σύννομος καὶ ταπεινὴ καὶ κατὰ φόβον πρὸς τὸν Θεόν.*



the gods and on divination. He sought to embody in his speculations the truth which lay at the bottom of all this, and to separate it from all admixture of superstition. And, in like manner, this general drift of a *positive* philosophy \* that sought to understand history, passed over, from the original Platonism, to the derivative Platonism of this age; and, to speak generally, in this latter form the tendency of the *original* Platonism may, in spite of all foreign additions, be clearly recognised under every new modification. It still continued to be its aim to trace throughout history the vestiges of a connection between the visible and invisible worlds, between the divine and the human, and to discover, in the great variety of religious traditions† and modes of worship, different forms of one revelation of the divine.

In opposition to infidelity, which appealed to the strife between different religions as a presumption of the falsehood of all, an apologetic tendency, which flowed from Platonism, pointed out the higher unity which lay at the root of this diversity. The coincidence of ideas in the different forms of revelation was by it made available, as *evidence* for the truth. Thus the effort to come to an understanding of history, to arrive at some comprehensive view which might reconcile the oppositions of historical development, gave birth to a peculiar religious and philosophical eclecticism. And such phenomena are usually found marking the conclusion of every great series of historical evolutions. Arrived at the limits of such a series, man feels disposed once more to look over the whole, which with all its parts now lies unfolded before him as one; just as the traveller, near the end of his journey, gladly pauses to survey the road he has left behind him.

By distinguishing form from essence, the spiritual from the sensual, the idea from the symbol which served for its representation, it was deemed possible to find the just medium between the extremes of superstition and unbelief, and to arrive at a right understanding of the different forms of religion. The devout and profoundly meditative Plutarch, who wrote near the close of the first century, may be con-

\* To avail myself of an expression which Schelling, in the new shaping of his philosophy, has made classical—*positive* philosophy, as opposed to the mere logical science of reason, *negative* philosophy.

† Συνάγειν ἰστορίαν, οἷον ἕλην φιλοσοφίας θεολογίαν τέλος ἐχούσης. De defectu oraculorum, c. 2.

sidered the representative of this direction of mind in religious speculation, which in his day was fully developed. He thus expresses himself on the relation of different religions to one another : \* “ As sun and moon, sky, earth, and sea, are common to all, while they have different names among different nations ; so likewise, though there is but *one* system of the world which is supreme, and one governing providence whose ministering powers are set over *all* men, yet the laws of different nations have given to them different names and modes of worship ; and though the holy symbols severally employed by these nations were not all equally obscure, still all alike failed of being perfectly safe guides for the contemplation of the divine. For some men, wholly mistaking their import, fell into superstition ; while others, in avoiding the quagmire of superstition, plunged unawares into the opposite gulf of infidelity.” A reverential regard for a higher necessity in the religious institutions of mankind, a recognition of a province elevated above human caprice, is avouched by Plutarch in the following remark, where he confronts the Stoics with a phrase from an Orphic hymn, which was often on their lips, as a motto for their pantheism : † — “ As Zeus is the beginning and centre of all—everything has sprung from Zeus—man’s first duty is to correct and improve his ideas of the gods, if anything impure or wrong has found its way into them. But if this is beyond his power, he should then leave every one to follow that opinion which he has received from the laws and religious traditions of his country.” In proof that a higher necessity lies at the foundation of such institutions, Plutarch here quotes the words of Sophocles, as witnessing to an innate and eternal law in the heart of humanity (Antig. 467) : “ The divine—religion—is something imperishable ; but its forms are subject to decay. God bestows many good things on men, but nothing imperishable ; for, as Sophocles says, even the rites of the gods are subject to death.” ‡

It filled Plutarch’s mind with sadness to think of those who took part in public worship from no other motive than respect to

\* See de Iside et Osiride.

† Ζεὺς ἀρχὴ, Ζεὺς μίση, Δίος δ’ ἐκ πάντα τέτυκται. Adv. Stoic. c. 31.

‡ Πολλὰ καλὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ δίδοντας ἀνθρώποις, ἀθάνατον δὲ μηδὲν ὥστε θήσκειν καὶ τὰ Θεῶν, Θεὸς δὲ οὐ κατὰ τὸν Σοφοκλῆα. De defectu oraculorum, c. 9.



the multitude, while in their own hearts they looked upon it as a mere farce. "Out of fear of the many they hypocritically mimic the forms of prayer and adoration; repeat words that contradict their philosophical convictions; and, when they offer sacrifice, see in the priest only the slaughtering cook."\* He rebukes those who, following the fashion of Euemerus, and attempting to explain everything in the doctrine of the gods after a natural way, wage war with the religious convictions of so many nations and races of men, while they seek to draw down the names of heaven to earth, and almost to banish all the religious belief that is implanted in man from his birth.† He sees men going astray between these two extremes;—either confounding the symbol with what it was designed to represent, and thus giving rise to superstition—as, for instance, when the names of the gods are transferred to their images, so that the multitude are led to believe that these images were themselves gods, in the same way as, in Egypt, the animals consecrated to the gods had become confounded with the latter;‡—or else running into the opposite views, which, being occasioned by these errors, result in infidelity.

If the way in which Plutarch explains and contemplates the opposition between superstition and unbelief shows, when applied to the phenomena of his own time, an inadequate and partial view of the subject, this must be attributed to that fundamental view, belonging to the essence of the Platonic philosophy, according to which, in religion, everything is referred to the intellectual element—to knowledge; while the deeper practical ground of religious conviction, and of the religious life,—their connection with the moral bent of the affections,—is overlooked. Accordingly, Plutarch considers the main source both of superstition and infidelity to be an intellectual error—in the former of a positive, in the latter of a negative kind; only, in the case of superstition, there is, moreover, a certain moral affection, which, arising out of those erroneous notions of the gods, reduces them simply into objects of fear.§ But he does not seem to have perceived

\* See Plutarch's tract: *Non posse suaviter vivi secundum Epicurum* c. 22.

† *De Iside et Osiride*, c. 23.

‡ L. c. c. 71.

§ Ἡ μὲν ἀθεότης λόγος ἐστὶ διεφυσμένος· ἡ δὲ δεισιδαιμονία πάδες ἐκλόγου φευδῶς ἐγγεγεννημένον. c. 2.

that a *πάθος* is the foundation of many forms of unbelief, as well as of superstition; and that both disorders of the spiritual life have their proper seat in the direction of the moral affections, in the disposition; that therefore the *πάθος* is usually the original cause of the evil, but the intellectual error only a secondary and symptomatic feature of it. Accordingly, it was to an erroneous conception of the gods that Plutarch ascribed the way in which the superstitious think of them as wrathful and vindictive; but he could understand such a stage of religious development well enough to recognise the truth on which it is founded, viz. that it is *only in this relation* that the gods can be represented to the religious consciousness of one who feels himself estranged from God. Hence also he erroneously supposed that nothing more is necessary for the recovery of the superstitious man, than simply to lead him by an intellectual process to a *true knowledge* of the gods, and of the fact that good only, and nothing that is evil, proceeds from them. For he failed to perceive that such an idea of the gods might itself be nothing else than a reflection of the superstitious man's own mental state, which therefore could only be got rid of by an immediate operation on the nature of the man himself. This error, again, was in some degree connected with another: for although against the Stoics he defended the Platonic doctrine of retribution,\* as a necessary means of man's reformation, and of purifying and deterring him from evil, and wrote a treatise expressly to vindicate the divine justice in punishing the wicked,† yet he was only too much a stranger to that conception of God's holiness, and to that sense of man's sinfulness as grounded in and intimately connected with it, which belong to the Theism of the Old Testament. Hence, the Old Testament idea of God, as the Holy one, as viewed from his own Platonic position, must have been unintelligible to him; and it is nothing strange if he failed to discover in Judaism the right notion of God's goodness.‡

\* Against Chrysippus, for instance, who puts this doctrine on a level with the stories with which old women frighten the children; Τὸν περὶ τῶν ὑπὸ Θεοῦ κολάσεων λόγον, ὡς οὐδὲν διαφέροντα τῆς Αἰκοῦς καὶ τῆς Αἰφιδίου, δι' ὧν τὰ παιδάκια τοῦ κακοσχολεῖν αἱ γυναῖκες ἀνέιργουσιν. De Stoicorum repugnantis, c. 15.

† His work on the Delay of Divine Punishments.

‡ De Stoicorum repugnantis, c. 38, where he refers to the example of



It was the purpose, then, of this apologetic and reforming philosophy of religion, to counteract infidelity as well as superstition, by setting forth the ideal matter contained in the old religions. From this position and with this object in view, Plutarch, in his hortatory discourse to a priestess of Isis,\* thus remarks: "As it is not his long beard and mantle that makes the philosopher, so is it neither a linen robe nor a shaven head that makes the priest of Isis. But the true priest of Isis is he who first of all receives from the laws the rites and customs pertaining to the gods, and then examines into their grounds, and philosophizes on the truth they contain." With some profoundness of meaning, Plutarch compares the old myths,—considered as representations of the ideas which have resulted from a refraction of the divine light by some foreign substance, a reappearance of it after having been broken by the intervention of some heterogenous medium,—to the rainbow as a refraction of the sun's light.†

We find here the first beginnings of an attempt to reconcile the natural and supernatural in religion; to adjust the position of the rationalist with that of the supra-naturalist, the scientific interest with the religious;—tendencies and ideas which, advancing beyond the position maintained by the old religions of Nature, stepped forward to meet the Theism of revelation. And it was by such means alone that a reconciliation could be effectually brought about, and a true understanding of the religious development of humanity become possible.

Plutarch distinguishes two different stages or positions of knowledge—that which remounts directly to the *divine* causality, and that which dwells on the natural causes which serve the former as its instruments. "The ancients," he says, "directed their attention simply to the divine in phenomena, since God is the beginning and centre of all, and from him all things proceed. They overlooked natural causes. The

the Jews to prove that the conception of the gods as *χρηστοί* was by no means to be found everywhere. And here we may remark that we would not deny the Jews themselves were partly in fault for the diffusion of such representations of their religion.

\* 'Ο τὰ δεικνύμενα δρώμενα περὶ τοὺς θεοὺς τούτους, ὅταν νόμῳ παραλάβῃ, λόγῳ ζητῶν καὶ φιλοσοφῶν περὶ τῆς ἐν αὐτοῖς ἀληθείας. c. 3.

† Καθὰπερ οἱ μαθηματικοὶ τὴν ἴσιν ἐμφασιν εἶναι τοῦ ἡλίου λέγουσι ποικιλομένην τῇ πρὸς τὸ νέφος ἀναχωρήσει τῆς ὀψείως, οὕτως ὁ μῦθος λόγου τινὸς ἐμφασις ἔστιν ἀνακλῶντος ἐπ' ἄλλα τὴν διάνοιαν. De Iside et Osiride, c. 20.

moderns, neglecting altogether the divine ground of things, suppose that everything can be explained by natural causes. Both these views, however, in and by themselves are alike partial and defective; and the right understanding of the matter requires that both should be combined.\* In attempting to show how a natural phenomenon may be a sign of the future, he says, "Divination and Physics may both be right; one may serve to point out the causes which have brought about a phenomenon; the other to discover the higher end which it is intended to subserve."† "They who suppose that the significancy of signs is nullified by the discovery of natural causes, forget that their argument against the signs of the gods apply also to those invented by human art; since in the latter case, too, one thing is made by human contrivance to serve as the sign of another; lights, for example, to serve as beacons, sun-dials to indicate time, and the like."

This distinction of the natural from the divine, in a matter, however, which was the joint work of both, was employed in a remarkable manner by Plutarch, for the purpose of so defending the divinity of the oracles, as to avoid, at the same time, all superstitious representations. While some were of opinion that the god himself dwelt in the prophetess at the Delphic shrine, and, employing her as his blind instrument, spoke through her mouth and suggested every word she uttered; others took advantage of this opinion, and, ridiculing the doctrine of such a divine influence on the human soul, and the very idea of inspiration, turned the whole into jest.‡ They laughed at the bad verses of the Pythoness, and inquired why it was that the oracles, once given in

\* "Οθεν ἀμφοτέρους ὁ λόγος ἰνδιής τοῦ προσήκοντός ἐστι, τοῖς μὲν τὸ δι' οὗ καὶ ὑφ' οὗ, τοῖς δὲ τὸ ἐξ ὧν καὶ δι' ὧν ἀγνοοῦσιν ἢ παραλείπουσιν. De defectu oraculorum, c. 47.

† Ἐκώλυε δ' οὐδὲν καὶ τὸν φυσικὸν ἐπιτυγχάνειν καὶ τὸν μάντιν, τοῦ μὲν τὴν αἰτίαν, τοῦ δὲ τὸ τέλος καλῶς ἐκλαμβάνοντος· ὑπέκειτο γὰρ τῷ μὲν ἐκ τίνων γέγονε καὶ πῶς πέφυκε, θεωρῆσαι, τῷ δὲ πρὸς τί γέγονε καὶ πῶς πέφυκε θεωρῆσαι. Pericles, c. 7.

‡ The sarcasm in Lucian's dialogue, Ζεὺς ἐλεγχόμενος, may serve as an example. "What the poets say, when possessed by the Muses, is true. But when forsaken by the goddesses, and left to sing for themselves, they are at a loss, and contradict what they had said before; so that one must excuse them if they perceive not the truth as men, when the agency has left them which had previously dwelt in them, and by which they invented."



poetry, were now conveyed in prose. But Plutarch sought to combine a recognition of the divine causality with an acknowledgment of the human individuality which served it as an organ. By distinguishing in the oracles the divine element and the human, he attempted in this case also to determine the just medium between superstition and infidelity. "We are not to believe," says he, "that the god makes the verses, but that, after he has communicated the moving impulse, each prophetess is moved in the way that most agrees with her peculiar nature.\* For let us suppose the oracles were not spoken, but delivered in writing; we should not, I imagine, in that case, ascribe to the god the strokes of the letters, and find fault with him because the writing was not so beautiful as that of the imperial edicts. Neither the language, nor the tone, nor the expression, nor the measure of the verse, proceeds from the god; all this comes from the woman. The god simply communicates the intuitions, and kindles up a light in the soul with regard to the future."† "As the body uses many organs, and the soul uses both the body and its parts as organs, so the soul in this instance becomes the organ of the god. But the fitness of an organ consists in its answering, by its own natural powers, the purpose of him who employs it as the means of representing his ideas. This, however, it cannot do purely and without adulteration. It cannot represent them as they exist in their author's mind. Much foreign matter is necessarily mixed up with them."‡ "If it is impossible," he says afterwards, "to force lifeless things, which remain unchanged, to uses which contradict their natural character—as a lyre, for instance, cannot be played as a flute, or a trumpet as a harp; so long as the artistic use of a particular instrument consists precisely in its being used conformably to its peculiar character—then it is really impossible to say how a being, possessed of a soul endowed with free will and reason, can be used otherwise than agreeably to the character, power, or nature which dwelt in him before." So, according to this view, the difference of the several individualities of character, and of the several modes of culture, will invariably

\* Ἐκείνου τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆς κινήσεως ἐνδιδόντος, ὡς ἐκάστη πέφυκε κινεῖσθαι τῶν προφητιδῶν. De Pythiæ oraculis, c. 7.

† Ἐκεῖνος μόνος τῆς φαντασίας παρίστησι καὶ ὥς ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ ποιεῖ πρὸς τὸ μέλλον.

‡ De Pythiæ oraculis, c. 21.

show themselves in the mode of manifestation which the inspiring agency of the divine causality assumes in each instance. The several peculiarities of such states of enthusiasm (ἐνθουσιασμός) he considers to arise from the conflict of the two tendencies,—the movement imparted from without, and that belonging to the proper nature of the individual; just as, when a body falls by the law of gravitation to the earth, a curvilinear motion is at the same time communicated to it.

By this speculative mode of apprehending the popular religion, men would be led, moreover, to reduce Polytheism to some higher unity as its root. The recognition of an original unity being a thing absolutely necessary for reason, Polytheism either proceeded out of that unity, or must be carried back to it. Polytheism felt itself continually impelled to derive the multitude of its gods from one original essence. Now the speculative mode of apprehension could not fail to develop the consciousness of this unity, and to render it still more distinct, and at the same time to exhibit clearly the relation of the manifold to the one. Thus had Plato long before sought to reduce Polytheism to some such higher unity, and had derived all existence “from the Creator and Father of the Universe, who is hard to find, and whom, when found, it is impossible to make known to all.”\* And now also, in the same way, this new philosophy of religion rose to the idea of one simple original essence, exalted above all plurality and all becoming; the only true *Being*; unchangeable, eternal; † from whom all existence in its several gradations has emanated,—the world of gods, as nearest akin to himself, being first and at the head of all. In these gods, that perfection, which in the Supreme essence was enclosed and unevolved, is expanded, and becomes knowable. They serve to exhibit in different forms the image of that Supreme essence, to which no one can rise except by the loftiest flight of contemplation, and after it has rid itself from all that pertains to sense—from all manifoldness. They are the mediators between man (amazed and stupified by manifoldness) and the Supreme Unity. A further distinction was also made between the *purely* spiritual, invisible deities, and those in nearer contact with the

\* In *Timæus*.

† Εἴς ὃν ἐνὶ τῷ νῦν τὸ αἰὶ πεπλήρωκε καὶ μόνον ἔστι τὸ κατὰ τοῦτον ἔντως ὄν.  
Plutarch. de ei apud Delphos, c. 20.



world of sense, by whom the life radiating from the Supreme essence is diffused over the world of sense, and the divine ideas, as far as is possible, *realized* in it. These were the manifest gods; \* the gods in the process of becoming; the θεοὶ γερητοὶ in contradistinction from the ὦν; the spirits who, according to Plato, animate the worlds. In this way was it contrived to maintain fast the position of the old natural religion, which confined itself to the intuitions of nature, and to unite it to the recognition of a supreme original essence, and of an invisible spiritual world, to which man's spirit strove to ascend from the sensuous things that had hitherto enslaved it. Accordingly there resulted two different stages of religion—that of the multitude, with minds amazed at, and taken up with, the manifold, who occupied themselves with none but those mediate deities who were less remote from them; and that of the spiritual men, living in contemplation, who rise above all that is sensuous, and soar upwards to the supreme original essence. Hence again arose two different positions in respect to divine worship—the purely spiritual position, which suited to the relation of the original essence, as exalted above all contact with the sensible world; and that of sensuous worship, which is adapted to the relation of those gods who are more closely connected with the world of sense. It is from this point of view that the following remark is made in the work on 'Offerings,' which is usually quoted as the work of Apollonius of Tyana: "We shall render the most appropriate worship to the deity, when to that God whom we call *The First*, who is one and separate from all, and after whom we recognise the others, we present no offerings whatever; kindle to him no fire, dedicate to him no sensible thing; for he needs nothing, even of all that natures more exalted than ours could give. The earth produces no plant, the air nourishes no animal, there is in short nothing, which would not be impure in his sight. In addressing ourselves to him, we must use only the higher Word,—that, I mean, which is not expressed by the mouth,—the silent inner word of the spirit." Even prayer, expressed in words, he would say, is beneath the dignity of that original essence, so exalted above all that is of sense; "and from the most glorious

\* Θεοὶ γερητοὶ as contradistinguished from the ἀφανῆς.

of all beings we must seek for blessings by that which is most glorious in ourselves. And that is the spirit which needs no organ." \* This highest position of spiritual worship, as addressing itself to the Supreme essence, was set up as a rival of Christianity, and as a means of dispensing with it.

We must not, however, transfer to this Supreme essence of the new Platonic philosophy of religion, the Christian conception of God as Creator and Governor of the world. The fundamental position of the ancient world—in life the deification of nature, in science the separation of the divine and human—appears again prominently and distinctly in this final shaping of philosophical thought with which that position ended. It belonged to the lofty dignity of that Supreme essence, that, wrapt in its transcendent perfection, it could enter into no contact with the sensible world; consequently, the only worship worthy of it is the contemplation of the spirit raised above all that is sensible; and this, therefore, was contrasted with practical life, as with a subordinate position. This conception, however, of spiritual worship is as distinct from the Christian view of it, as the conception of the Supreme essence itself is. In the height of its speculations this philosophy of religion proceeded to still further refinement on the conception of Supreme essence. In Plato it is necessary to distinguish what he says of the idea of the absolute—the good in itself, exalted above all being†—from what he says of the Supreme Spirit, the Father of the Universe.‡ But the new Platonists substituted the idea of the absolute for the Supreme essence itself—as the first, simplest principle which is anterior to all existence; of which nothing determinate can be predicated; to which no consciousness, no self-contemplation can be ascribed; inasmuch as to do so would immediately imply a duality, a distinction of subject and object. This Supreme entity can be known only by an intellectual intuition of the spirit, transcending itself, and emancipating itself from its own limits. § Now this mere logical tendency, by means of

\* In Eusebius *Præparat. evangel.* l. IV. c. 13; and Porphyry *de abstinentia carnis*, l. II. s. 34, who cites these words of Apollonius of Tyana, and busies himself with explaining and applying them.

† In the *Republic*.

‡ In the *Timæus* and *Philebus*.

§ As Plotinus says: Τῆς γνώσεως διὰ τοῦ τῶν ἄλλων γιγνομένης καὶ τοῦ τοῦ νοῦ γιγνώσκειν δυνάμεντος, ἵνα βεβαιώσῃ τοῦτο τὴν τοῦ νοῦ φύσιν, οἷον ἂν ἀλλοιωτο ἢ



which men thought to arrive at the conception of such an absolute, the *ὄν*, was united with a certain mysticism, which, by a transcendent state of feeling, communicated, as it were, to this abstraction what the mind would receive as a reality. The absorption of the spirit into that super-existence (*τὸ ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας*), so as to be entirely identified with it, or such a revelation of the latter to the spirit raised above itself, was regarded as the highest end which the spiritual life could reach. And this, Porphyry relates, was once experienced by himself, in his sixty-eighth year; though by his teacher, Plotinus, four times.\*

By virtue of the gradations in the evolution of the chain of existence, from the transcendent original down to the world of sense, and by virtue of a symbolical interpretation connected with this doctrine, it was made possible to spiritualize and to appropriate every part of the existing *cultus*. Thus, e.g., the rhetorician Dio Chrysostom, who wrote in the time of Trajan, puts in the mouth of Phidias the following defence of images of the gods: "It cannot be said that it would be better for men simply to lift up their eyes to the heavenly bodies, and that there should be no images at all. All these the man of reason worships, and believes that he beholds from afar the blessed gods. But love to the gods makes every one rejoice to be able to honour them near at hand, since now he can approach and touch them, offer to them with implicit faith, and crown them. Indeed," he says, "it is a part of human nature to endeavour to make present before our senses the absent objects of our love. Hence the Barbarians, who were ignorant of the arts, were obliged to transfer their worship to other, certainly far less appropriate objects—to mountains, trees, and stones."† Similar arguments are employed by Porphyry in justification of

ἐπιβολῇ ἀθεόφ. Anecdota græca, ed. Villosion. Venet. 1781. T. II p. 237.

\* Thus Porphyry relates of him in the account of his life: 'Εξάνη ἑκάστος ὁ θεὸς ὁ μήτε μορφὴν μήτε τινα ἰδέαν ἔχων, ὑπὲρ δὲ νοῦν, καὶ πᾶν τὸ νοητὸν ἰδρυμένος· ὃ δὴ καὶ ἐγὼ ἀπαξ λέγω πλησιάσαι καὶ ἰνωθῆναι: and of Plotinus he says, it was his highest aim ἰνωθῆναι καὶ πελάσσαι τῷ ἐπὶ πᾶσι θεῷ, and four times, during his abode with Porphyry, he had attained to this, ἐνεργείᾳ ἀρρήτῳ καὶ οὐ δυνάμει.

† See Dio Chrysostom's remarkable discourse on the knowledge of the gods. Orat. XII. ed. Reiske. II. Vol. I. p. 405 et seq.

image-worship.\* “By images addressed to sense the ancients represented God and his powers—by the visible they typified the invisible for those who had learned to read in these types, as in a book, a treatise on the gods. We need not wonder if the ignorant consider the images to be nothing more than wood or stone; for just so, they who are ignorant of writing see nothing in monuments but stone, nothing in tablets but wood, and in books but a tissue of papyrus.”

Thus then this spiritualizing apprehension of the old polytheistic religion, moulded by the spirit of the Platonic philosophy, so far as this extended its influence unto the religious consciousness, had gone on forming itself as a means of conciliation between superstition and unbelief. And this it had done independently of the influence of Christianity. For we find this direction of mind already fully developed in Plutarch, and, when he wrote, Christianity certainly had as yet produced no influence on the spiritual atmosphere at large. But a new zeal in behalf of the old religion, in which men had long been striving with all their might to keep up the breath of life, had to be awakened by this philosophy of religion, now that the ancient rites were threatened with destruction by Christianity with its new and positive religious interest. And thus there arose out of those already existing ideas a new polemical and apologetic direction, which had for its end the preservation of the rotten fabric of paganism. Artificial and violent expedients, however, cannot long help any cause; and this effort, often but too artificial, but ill concealed the untenable character of the religion which men were labouring to uphold. By such means these philosophical refiners of religion were themselves preparing many a weapon of assault against the popular religion, of which, in after ages, the Christians skilfully availed themselves. Plutarch even, at his early date, employed the doctrine of demons, as intermediate beings between gods and men, for the purpose of defending the traditions of the popular religion, and vindicating the dignity of the gods—transferring from the latter many things to these intermediate beings, who, he maintained, had been confounded with the others.† Ac-

\* In Eusebius *Præparat. evangel.* l. III. c. 7.

† Plutarch. *de defectu oraculorum*, c. 12 et seq.



according to Plutarch's doctrine, these demons, half related to the gods, half to men, serve as the means of intercourse between both.\* But among these demons also he supposed that a graduated subordination prevailed, according as the divine or the sensuous element † predominated in them. Where the latter was the case, it gave rise to malignant demons, with violent desires and passions; and to conciliate these, and to avert their evil influences, was the design of many of the noisier and ruder forms of worship. Such, too, were those which had given rise to human sacrifices. In this idea Porphyry concurred, and represented these demons as impure beings akin to matter, which according to the Platonists is the origin of all evil. These are they that delight in bloody offerings, for thereby their sensuous desires are gratified; these prompt to all evil impulses; they draw men from the worship of the gods by pretending to be such themselves, and thereby they give rise to unworthy opinions concerning the deities, and concerning the Supreme God himself. Their delusive arts have been successful from of old. Hence those unworthy and indecent notions and stories of the gods, which are current among the multitude, and have received countenance even from poets and philosophers. ‡ It is easy to see how greatly such explanations would assist the Christians in their attacks on the popular religion; and it is evident that the same representations, adopted by opposite views, and modified in different forms, might be seized upon, sometimes for the defence, sometimes for the assault, of paganism.

It was impossible, however, that religious knowledge and religious life should make progress among the people by means of explanations which to them must have been unintelligible. The people adhered closely to the external forms of their worship; they clung firmly to that old superstition which it was attempted to reanimate, without troubling themselves about more spiritual views. Accordingly Dionysius of Halicarnassus could truly say § that "a few only share this philosophical view of religion. But the many who are desti-

\* What seemed incompatible with the exalted dignity of the gods was transferred to them, ταῦτα λειτουργοῖς θεῶν ἀνατιθέντες, ὥσπερ ὑπηρέταις καὶ γραμματεῦσι.

† The παθητικόν and ἀλόγον.

‡ In Eusebius Præparat. evangel. l. IV. c. 21, 22.

§ Archæol. l. II. c. 20, near the end.

tute of philosophical culture usually understand those mythical stories in the worst possible way; and one of two things is the case: either the gods are despised for taking an interest in such pitiable affairs, or else men abandon themselves to the worst abuses, because they find the same practised among their gods."

Again, inseparable from that stage of progress at which the ancient world stood, with its lingering zeal for civil liberty—not wholly freed however from narrow egoism—was a certain aristocratic spirit. This, as we have already seen, made itself felt in religion. The higher religious point of view, which necessarily supposed philosophical culture, could not be transferred to the multitude; *they* seemed as it were excluded from the higher life, and incapable of religion except in the form of superstition. The great body of tradesmen and mechanics were considered as unsusceptible of that higher life which alone answered to man's true dignity,\*—as abandoned to common life.† Platonism was itself infected with this aristocratic spirit of Antiquity, and by it the stage of science, at which alone it was possible to rise to pure truth in religion, was opposed to that of opinion (δόξα) among the multitude (οἱ πολλοί), where the true must ever be mixed up with the false. Accordingly, it by no means fell within the aim of this new philosophy of religion to elevate the people to any higher stage of religious development;—for which, indeed, it was destitute of the requisite means. Plotinus, therefore, distinguishes two different states, that of the noble-minded (the σπουδαῖοι) and that of the gross multitude (the πολλοί.) None but the former attain to the Highest; the others remain behind, conversant with the merely human (the opposite to the Divine). And even at this stage of common life, it is necessary again to distinguish those who, in some sort, take an interest and part in virtue, from the wretched mass, the day-labourers,—the better class of whom even are necessarily engrossed with the care of providing for the daily wants of life; the rest, however, abandon themselves to all that is vile.‡ It was not till the word that went forth from

\* Βίος βάνανσος.

† Οὐ γὰρ οἶοντ' ἐπιστηδεύσαι τὰ τῆς ἀρετῆς ζῶντα βίον βάνανσον ἢ θητικόν. Aristoteles Polit. l. III. c. 5.

‡ Ὡς διττὸς ὁ ἐνθάδε βίος, ὁ μὲν τοῖς σπουδαίοις, ὁ δὲ τοῖς πολλοῖς τῶν ἀνθρώπων.



the carpenter's lowly roof had been published by fishermen and tent-makers, that these aristocratic notions of the ancient world could be overthrown.

As usually happens at epochs of transition, the particular intellectual tendencies whose aim it is to maintain the old are often forced to pass beyond it, and so of themselves facilitate the reception of the new, whose development they were designed to prevent. And such was the case now with this philosophy of religion, relatively to the old world on the one hand, and to Christianity on the other. While the new Platonism was labouring to preserve and defend the former, it yet contributed of itself to excite deeper religious wants, which sought satisfaction in something better. It set afloat religious ideas, in which there dwelt a power unknown to those who first gave utterance to them, and which could not fail to prepare a way by which Christianity might introduce itself into the culture of the times. Thus the influence which this particular mental direction exercised on religious life called forth a longing which tended to a different end from what it purposed. But at the same time this undefined longing, unaccompanied with any clear consciousness of its import, exposed ardent minds to many dangerous delusions so long as the satisfying object was yet to be found. Accordingly this state of feeling called forth a host of fanatics, and procured for them a hearing.

Accordingly at this date the Roman empire, which still comprised the East and the West, was full of men who wandered from country to country boasting of divine revelations and supernatural powers—men in whom, as is usual in such times of religious ferment, the *self*-deception of fanaticism was mixed with more or less of *intentional* fraud. For an instance we may mention Alexander of Abonoteichus, in Pontus, whose life Lucian has written with his usual satire, and who everywhere, from Pontus to Rome, found believers in his pretended arts of magic and soothsaying, and was revered and consulted as a prophet even by the most exalted individuals. To a better class among these men belonged Apollonius of Tyana, so famous in the age of the apostles. It is impossible, however, to form any certain judgment of his character,

πῶν τοῖς μὲν σπουδαίοις πρὸς τὸ ἀκρότατον καὶ τὸ ἄνω, τοῖς δὲ ἀνδραπικωτέροις, διττὸς αὖ ὢν, ὁ μὲν μνηστὴρ ἀρετῆς μετίσχει ἀγαθοῦ τινος, ὁ δὲ φαῦλος ὄχλος εἰον χειροτέχνες τῶν πρὸς ἀνάγκην τοῖς ἐπεικιστέροις. Ennead. II. l. X. c. 9.

so imperfect are our means of information. Those who like Philostratus (at the close of the second century), attempted, with their marvellous stories, to paint him as a hero of the old popular religion, have done most to injure his reputation with posterity. He seems to have travelled about, seeking to reanimate religious faith; but, by furnishing food to a prurient curiosity about matters that must for ever remain hidden from man, he at the same time promoted fanaticism. He declaimed against a superstition which, by leading men to suppose that offerings and sacrifices could purchase impunity for crime, served as a prop for superstition: he taught that without virtue and morality no kind of outward worship is pleasing to the gods. He spoke against the cruel gladiatorial shows; and when the Athenians, who were celebrating such games, invited him to the public assembly, he replied that he could not tread on a spot stained by the shedding of so much human blood, and wondered the gods did not forsake the Acropolis. When the president of the Eleusinian mysteries refused the privilege of initiation to Apollonius of Tyana, it is difficult to say whether the Hierophant meant honestly, and regarded Apollonius as a magician, who dealt in unlawful arts, or whether he was not, rather, jealous of the great influence, unfavourable to the priesthood, which Apollonius exercised over the people. For his influence is said to have been so great, that the society of Apollonius was looked upon by many as a greater privilege than initiation into the mysteries. The words with which he is said to have concluded all his prayers, and in which he summed up every particular request, are characteristic of the man: "Give me, ye gods, what I deserve."\* At the same time, he is said to have observed, that, if he belonged to the good, God would give him more than he asked, therefore more than he desired. Such words do not necessarily imply a spirit of self-exaltation; by them he simply intended to express his conviction that prayer can avail nothing unless joined with a virtuous life; that the good man only can expect blessings from the gods. Still, in such language, we cannot but recognise a mode of judging one's self, quite opposed to the spirit of Christianity.

There is extant a letter consoling a father on his son's death,

\* Δοίητέ μοι τὰ ὀφειλόμενα. Philostrat. l. IV. f. 200, ed. Morell. Paris, 1608,—c. 40, f. 181, ed. Olear.



which is ascribed to Apollonius. If it is genuine, it affords us an insight into his pantheistic tendency. At all events, we recognise in it, as we do in so many other of the phenomena of this age, the pantheistic element into which, as its fundamental unity, the decaying system of Polytheism was passing.\* In this letter the doctrine is advanced that birth and death are only in appearance; that which separates itself from the *one* substance (the *one* divine essence), and is caught up by matter, seems to be born; that, again, which releases itself from the bonds of matter, and is reunited with the one divine essence, seems to die. There is at most an alternation between becoming visible and becoming invisible.† In all there is, properly speaking, but the One essence, which alone acts and suffers, by becoming all things to all—the eternal God, whom men wrong when they deprive him of what properly can only be attributed to him, and transfer it to other names and persons.‡ “How can we grieve for one, when by change of form, not of essence, he becomes a god instead of a man?”§ So Plotinus, when dying, is said to have remarked that he was endeavouring to restore the divine in man to the divine in the universe.||

There was, in short, everywhere an obvious need of a revelation from heaven to give to inquiring minds that assurance of peace which they were unable to find in the jarring systems of the old philosophy, and in the artificial life to which the old religion had been reawakened. Even that zealous champion of the latter, Porphyry, testifies to this deep-felt necessity; which, leaning on the authority of divine responses, he proposed to supply by his Collection of Ancient Oracles. On this point he says,¶ “The utility of such a collection will best

\* Ep. 58 among those published by Olearius in the Works of Philostratus.

† Θάνατος οὐδείς οὐδενὸς ἢ μόνον ἐμφάσει, καθάπερ οὐδὲ γένεσις οὐδενὸς ἢ μόνον ἐμφάσει· τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἐξ οὐσίας τραπὲν εἰς φύσιν ἔδοξε γένεσις· τὸ δὲ ἐκ φύσεως εἰς οὐσίαν κατὰ ταῦτὰ θάνατος.

‡ Τὴν πρώτην οὐσίαν, ἣ δὴ μόνη ποιεῖται καὶ πάσχει, πᾶσι ληρομένη πάντα, θεὸς αἰδιος, ὀνόμασι δὲ καὶ προσώποις ἀφαιρουμένη τὸ ἴδιον, ἀδικουμένη τε.

§ Τρόπον μεταβάσει καὶ οὐχὶ φύσεως.

|| Πειράσθαι τὸ ἐν ἡμῖν θεῖον ἀνάγειν πρὸς τὸ ἐν τῷ παντὶ θεῖον. Porphyr. vit. Plotin. c. 2.

¶ Περὶ τῆς ἐκ λογίων φιλοσοφίας in Euseb. Præparat. l. IV. c. 7, near the end: “Ὡς δ’ ἔχει ὡφέλειαν ἡ συναγωγὴ μάλιστα εἰσονται ὅσοι περὶ τὴν ἀλήθειαν ὠδινάντες ἤξαντό ποτε τῆς ἐκ θεῶν ἐπιφανείας τυχόντες ἀνάπαυσιν λαβεῖν, τῆς ἀπορείας διὰ τὴν τῶν λεγόντων ἀξιοπίστον διδασκαλίαν.

be understood by those who, feeling the pain of craving after truth, have sometimes wished that some divine manifestation might be imparted to them, in order to be able to set all their doubts at rest by trustworthy information."

The life of such a person, harassed from his very youth with doubts, unsettled by the strife of opposite opinions, seeking the truth with ardent longing, and conducted at last, by this long unsatisfied craving, to Christianity, is delineated by the author of a sort of romance (partly philosophical and partly religious), belonging to the second or third century, *The Clementines*—which, though a fiction, is clearly a fiction drawn from real life. We may therefore safely appeal to it, as presenting a true and characteristic sketch, which doubtless applied to many an inquiring spirit of those times.

Clement, a member of a noble Roman family, who lived about the time of the first preaching of the gospel, thus tells his own story:—"From my early youth I busied myself with doubts of this kind, which had found entrance into my soul I hardly know how: After death shall I exist no more, and will no one even once think of me, since infinite time sinks all human things in forgetfulness? Will it be just the same as if I had never been born? When was the world created, and what existed before the world was? If it existed from all eternity, then it will continue to exist always. If it had a beginning, it will likewise have an end. And after the end of the world, what will there be then? what, perhaps, but the silence of death! Or probably something will then be of which no conception can be formed at present. Incessantly haunted," he proceeds, "by such thoughts as these, which came I know not whence, I was sorely troubled, so that I grew pale and emaciated—and, what was most terrible, whenever I strove to get rid of these anxious questionings as useless, I only experienced a renewal of my sufferings in an aggravated degree, which occasioned me the greatest distress. I was not aware that in these reflections I had a friendly companion who was leading me to eternal life, as I afterwards learned by experience; and I thanked the great Disposer of all for granting me such guidance, since it was by these thoughts, so distressing at first, that I was impelled to seek till I found what I needed. And when I had obtained this, then I pitied, as miserable men, those whom before in my ignorance I was in danger of estimating as



most happy. As then, from my childhood, I was constantly occupied with such thoughts, I resorted to the schools of the philosophers, hoping to learn there some certain knowledge; but I saw nothing but the building up and the tearing down of theories—contention answered by contention: at one moment, for example, proof of the soul's immortality was triumphant, then again its mortality. When the former proof prevailed, I rejoiced; when the latter, I was depressed. Thus was I driven to and fro by different opinions; and was forced to conclude that things appear not as they are in themselves, but as they happen to be presented on this or that side. My brain was in a greater whirl than ever, and I sighed from the bottom of my heart." As he could arrive at no fixed and certain conviction by means of reason, Clement now resolved to seek relief by another method—by visiting Egypt, the land of mysteries and apparitions, and seeking out a magician who might summon for him a spirit from the other world. The apparition of such a spirit would give him intuitive evidence of the soul's immortality. No arguments afterwards would be able to shake his belief in what had been thus made certain by the evidence of his senses. But the advice of a sensible philosopher dissuaded him from thus seeking the truth by forbidden arts, to which if he were to resort, he could never again hope to enjoy peace of conscience. In this state of mind, full of doubts, unsettled, inquiring, distressed, and deeply agitated, he came in contact with the gospel, as preached in demonstration of the Spirit and of power—and his case may illustrate that of many others.

If, now, we review our previous sketch of the religious state of the pagan world, we cannot fail to observe many and various antagonistic elements to, and also points of union with, Christianity; antagonistic elements, however, which were capable of becoming points also of union, and points of union capable of proving antagonistic. Opposed to Christianity, stood at one and the same time that despotism of the powers of infidelity and of superstition. *The might of infidelity*—the understanding, which denies everything above nature, the *nil admirari* wisdom—set itself to oppose Christianity, as it did everything else that made the least requisition on man's religious nature. By all who had followed this direction, Christianity was placed under the same category with the worst forms of fana-

ticism and superstition. But *there was also an infidelity* which had its root in a need of believing, which, as we have seen in the case above mentioned of Clement, could no longer be satisfied by anything that the existing state of the ancient world in religion and philosophy could afford. And such an unbelief could be overcome by the force of divine truth in the gospel; infidelity itself became here a preparatory influence to the reception of Christianity. On the other hand, the supremacy of a superstition clinging to sense opposed the adoption of a religion which proclaimed the worship of God in spirit and in truth; and this superstition was in close alliance with the old religion, which had lately been elevated to a new authority over the spirit of man. But that authority was something unnatural,—it was a last effort of expiring life: and at the root of the prevailing superstition there lay, as we have seen, for the most part, a need which looked for satisfaction, and which could find it only in Christianity;—the need of deliverance from the deep-felt schism within—of reconciliation with the unknown God, after which a conscious or unconscious longing yearned eagerly. By means of an unconscious, undefined craving of this sort, many no doubt fell victims to artifice and fraud; and it was necessary that the power exercised by such means over the minds of men should be overthrown by Christianity before it could pave its way to their hearts. But there dwelt in the gospel a power to confound all deceptive arts, and through every delusive show to penetrate to the heart of man.

Platonism prepared the way for Christianity, by spiritualizing the religious modes of thinking; by bringing back polytheism to a certain unity of divine consciousness; by awakening many ideas closely allied to Christianity, as, for example, the idea of a redemption under the notion of a deliverance from the ὕλη—from the blind power (i.e.) of nature opposed to the divine;\* of an elevation to a state of divine life removed beyond the influence of natural powers.† But even that

\* Of attraction and repulsion, of every description of γωντεία, the ἀγνητεύσιον.

† We may mention here also the idea of an αἰώνιος ζωῆς, which God possesses. Plutarch. de Iside et Osiride, c. 1. The idea of a kingdom of God, depending on the condition that the divine element in man gains the supremacy; in the language of Psammon, an Egyptian priest in the



which is best suited to form a preparatory position may also be easily converted into one of fierce hostility, when it attempts to maintain the old against the higher principle which has presented itself. Accordingly in Platonism we still discern the spirit of the old world, though pregnant also with foreign elements. It was especially that *humility of knowledge* and that *renunciation of self* which Christianity required that Neo-Platonism could not bring itself to acquiesce in. It could not be induced to sacrifice its philosophical, aristocratic notions, to a religion which proposed to make the higher life a common possession for all mankind. The religious eclecticism of this direction of mind was naturally ill-disposed to the exclusive supremacy of a religion that would allow of no rival, but would subject all to itself. Yet this philosophy of religion found it impossible to prevent the ideas and wants it had awakened from leading beyond itself, and to Christianity. Platonism, it is true, revived the faith in a superterrestrial nature and destination of the spirit; but the way in which the doctrine of the soul's immortality, reduced to the ideas of an eternity of the spirit, and of the soul's preëxistence, was united with the transmigration of souls, failed to satisfy the universal religious wants of mankind. If, according to this doctrine, —which, however, ultimately applied only to such souls as had by philosophy attained to the intuition of truth—if even those souls which, having emancipated themselves from the bonds of their earthly existence, were able to rise to a life wholly above sense, wholly divine, must yet, after a certain time, yield again to the force of destiny, and plunge once more into the cycle of earthly existence;—this was not such an expectation as could satisfy the desires of the human man. And it is therefore easily conceivable what power the proclamation of eternal life, in the Christian sense, must have exercised over a want thus excited and yet left unsatisfied.\*

This school itself then could not fail to give rise to opposite views: on the one side were those who continued to hold

time of Alexander the Great,—‘Ὅτι πάντες ἄνθρωποι βασιλεύονται ὑπὸ θεοῦ· τὸ γὰρ ἀρχόν ἐν ἐκάστῳ καὶ κρατοῦν, θεῖον ἐστίν. In the Life of Alexander, c. 27, near the end.

\* We have an illustration of it in Justin Martyr's account of his own religious history, at the beginning of his dialogue with Trypho, where he relates how he was led from Platonism to embrace Christianity.

this position in hostility to Christianity; on the other, those to whom it proved a point of transition to Christianity. But then, again, the latter were exposed to a peculiar danger. Their earlier prejudices might react in such a way as to pervert their mode of apprehending and of shaping Christian truth; so that unconsciously they took with them much foreign matter derived from their previous opinions.

### *Religious Condition of the Jewish People.*

In the midst of the nations addicted to the deification of nature in the form either of Polytheism or of Pantheism, we see a people among whom the faith in one Almighty God, the absolutely free Creator and Governor of the world, was propagated, not as an esoteric doctrine of the priests, but as a common possession for all, as the central animating principle of a whole people and state. And necessarily connected with the faith in an All-holy God was the recognition of a holy law as the rule of life, a conviction of the opposition between holiness and sin—a consciousness which the æsthetic position of the old religion of Nature (though single gleams of it occasionally flashed out) was unable to evolve with the same strength, clearness, and constancy. This difference between the Hebrew people and other nations is of itself sufficient to refute every attempt which may be made to ascribe a similar origin to the Jewish as to other national religions. It is a fact that bears witness to the revelation of a living God, to whom the religion owed both its existence and its progressive development, as well as to that peculiar course of discipline whereby the Jews were trained to be the instruments by which this revelation was to be preserved and propagated. A Philo might, with good reason, say of this people, that to them was intrusted the office of being prophets for all mankind; for it was *their* destination, as distinct from the nations sunk in the worship of nature, to bear witness to the living God. The revelations and providences vouchsafed to them were designed for the whole human race, over which, from the foundation here laid, the kingdom of God was in time to be extended. Theism and the Theocracy must be embodied in an outward shape, as a something pertaining exclusively to a distinct people, in order



that from the shell of this national form there might issue a kingdom of God which should embrace all mankind. Yet as the idea of the Theocracy cannot, by external forms and rules, be realized in the life of any single people, nor generally in the rude stock of human nature, unennobled and persisting in its estrangement from God, a disproportion inevitably arose even here between the revealed idea and its outward manifestation; and this very circumstance contained the prophecy of a future reconciliation. The idea must strive to pass beyond a form of manifestation, which as yet does not fully answer it, towards a development more conformable to its essence and fulness; and it contains in itself the prophecy of such a development. If history generally by its very nature partakes more fully of the prophetic character in proportion as there dwells in it a pervading reference to the great moments of history—to all that is important as bearing on the progress of mankind as a race; then the religion and history of the Jewish people must in a preëminent degree be full of such prophetic elements. The destinies of this nation were so over-ruled as invariably to call forth a still stronger consciousness of that schism and inward disunion, of which we have spoken above, and of a longing after deliverance from it. This deliverance is identical with the restoration of the fallen Theocracy, which was to be accompanied with promulgation to all nations of the worship of the living God. The appearance of him, by whom this was to be accomplished, who is the true theocratic King, forms therefore the focus of the prophetic element, which, although subsequently unfolded in the several prophecies with special clearness and distinctness of vision, is, nevertheless, not some extraneous element superadded to the national faith, but one which was grounded by an inherent necessity in the whole structure of the national worship and history. The idea of the Messiah is the culminating point of this religion, to which all the scattered rays of the divine within it converge.

While the religious belief of the Greeks and Romans suffered a violent shock in the revolutions which these nations experienced, the innate energy of the theistic faith is clearly manifested in the vitality with which it preserved itself unshaken amid all the political storms that agitated the Hebrew people. Nay, the very oppressions they suffered under the

yoke of foreign conquerors did but serve to confirm this faith, although the right understanding of its import did not advance at an equal pace. But as everything in human nature that develops itself is liable to the corruption that is inherent in the latter, so revealed religion could not escape its influence. Even Christianity, the absolute religion of humanity, could not be exempt from this necessity; only it possessed the power of coming forth ennobled from the conflict with these corruptions by making use of them to free itself from the admixture of foreign elements. This power did not reside in Judaism, for it was not designed to endure for all times as a religion in its particular form, but by the dissolution of this form to make way for that higher creation which it foretold. If, however, this form, instead of yielding to that higher development, should seek still to maintain itself, outliving its energies, it must drag on without vital power. And here, again, we shall see that, if that which is but preparatory in its design fails to understand its true relation to the whole historical development, and attempts to assert its own independence, then it invariably becomes an opponent of that higher stage which it was its very purpose to prepare for.

What has just been said is applicable to the direction of the religious spirit which governed the great mass of the Jewish people. With them, the consciousness of being God's people, misapprehended according to the notions of their fleshly minds, served but to foster a national pride of which it had become the foundation. Men fastened on the letter—the letter interpreted by the contracted views of minds turned only on the world. They clung to the sensible form and envelope, and were not able to perceive the spirit they shrouded and the ideas they contained, because there was no sensitive congenial spirit to meet the divine truth as it was offered. The sentence was here verified which our Lord himself pronounced, "He who has, to him shall be given; and he who hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath."

The consciousness of the declining condition of the Theocracy had, it is true, called forth a deeper yearning after the promised epoch of its glorious restoration, and the sense of oppression under the yoke of foreign and domestic tyrants had awakened a more ardent longing for the Deliverer, and the appearance of Him from whom that glorious restoration



was to proceed—the promised Messiah. But the same sordid views which led to a misapprehension of the nature of the Theocracy generally could not fail to lead to a misapprehension of this idea also, which forms the central point towards which the whole Theocracy itself had tended. The worldly interpretation of the idea of the Theocracy, and of the religious spirit generally necessary, made them unable to comprehend the idea of the Messiah in any but a worldly point of view. As the great mass of the people were bowed down by the sense of temporal much more than of spiritual wretchedness, degradation, and bondage, it was chiefly as a deliverer from the former that they looked and yearned for the Messiah. Man's love of the supernatural took here altogether a worldly shape; the supernatural, as it was pictured before the imagination of the worldly heart, was but a fantastic imitation of the natural exaggerated into the monstrous. The deluded Jews, incapable of a spiritual apprehension of divine things, expected a Messiah who should employ the miraculous power, with which he was to be divinely armed, in the service of their earthly lusts; who should free them from the yoke of bondage, execute fearful vengeance on the enemies of the Theocratic people, and make them the masters of the world in a universal empire, whose glory they delighted in depicting with the most sensual images that the wildest fancy could suggest.

The nation was destitute of guides and teachers to instruct them in the nature of their religion and of the Theocracy, and to undeceive them as to their erroneous fancies. Most of their guides were blind leaders of the blind, men who only confirmed the people in their fleshly perverse imaginations and in the errors to which they led. Great mischief had particularly been occasioned by a fanatical zealot, Judas of Gamala, or the Galilaean, who, about the year 11 after the birth of Christ, rose up to oppose the census or registration decreed by Augustus Cæsar. A people, who, as a just punishment for their sins, had already forfeited their liberty, and were about to forfeit it for ever;—such a people were invited by him to throw off, at once, the yoke of Roman bondage. He urged those who in disposition were very far from serving God as their Lord to acknowledge Him as their only Lord, and to endure no badge of the dominion of a stranger over the people of God. While others were for waiting till deliverance should be wrought by

the power of God, through the Messiah, he, on the contrary, demanded that they should themselves lay the first hand to the work. God, said he, will help those only who do their own part; but by this he meant nothing else than the resistance of human will to a power placed by God's appointment over a people that had not understood its vocation, and had been unfaithful to it; and who, by their very way of thinking, had become incapable of freedom.\* This was the source of the wild fanaticism of the zealots, in which political and worldly-religious motives were blended together into an impure combination—a combination which at all times had been most fatally productive of mischief to nations, as the history of the Jewish people, down to its final destruction, exemplifies throughout. When John the Baptist, in obedience to his call from God to be a preacher of repentance, raised a divine voice in the wilderness of a degenerate people, seeking to awaken them to a consciousness that it was in the disposition of the heart that the way must be prepared for the regeneration of the Theocracy, and directing the longing wishes of his contemporaries from the earthly to the divine, yet, notwithstanding the great effect which the commanding power of his words produced, he found so little sympathy with that which was the true aim and spirit of his preaching, that at last he fell a victim to a league struck between worldly and spiritual tyranny—a martyr to that truth, which, with a denunciatory zeal that regarded no consequences, he maintained against all the wickedness of his age. The death of John foreshadowed the fate which was to terminate the earthly course of one greater than himself—one whom it was his divine vocation to bear witness of, and prepare the way for.

Incomprehensible, therefore, to men afflicted with such blindness, were the words of the Son of God concerning the *true* freedom which he had been sent from heaven to bestow on those who sighed under the bondage of sin. As with their carnal temper they knew not the Father, so also they could not discern in Jesus the Son, because they had no ear for the voice of the Father, witnessing of him in the wants of the human heart. The temper which had made them disregard the prophetic warning of John the Baptist, rendered them deaf also to the

\* Joseph. Archæol. l. XVIII. c. 1, de B. J. l. II. c. 8, s. 1.



warning call of the greatest among all the prophets. Under the influence of the same temper, they became to their ruin a prey to the artful designs of every *false* prophet who knew how to flatter the wishes which such a disposition inspired.

When the temple of Jerusalem was already in flames, one of those false prophets could persuade crowds of the people that God was about to show them the way of deliverance by a miraculous sign—such a sign as they had often demanded of Him who would have shown them the *true* way to *true* deliverance, and who did refer them to the *true* signs of God in history; and thousands of deluded men fell victims to the flames or to the Roman sword. Josephus, who was no Christian, but who contemplated with less prejudice than others the fate of his nation, of which he was an eye-witness, closes his recital of this event with the following remarkable words:—"The unhappy people seemed, at that time, to have no wish but to be cheated by impostors who were bold enough to lie in the name of God. But to the manifest prodigies that portended the approaching destruction they paid no regard—they had no faith in them: like men wholly infatuated, and as if they had neither eyes nor soul, they heeded not what God was announcing."

Among the Jewish theologians in Palestine we find each of the three main directions, which, when the forms of a positive religion decay, usually make their appearance in opposition to each other. First, the traditional tendency, which, mixing up with the original religion many foreign elements, seeks to combine them all into an artificial whole; and which, having lost the living spirit, holding tenaciously to form and letter, substitutes, in the place of the real essence of the religion, a barren orthodoxy and a dead ceremonial. And this in the next place calls forth a reaction—a tendency to reform. But a reaction of this kind, proceeding rather from an intellectual than from a religious element, allows the spirit of negation to predominate over the positive religious interest, easily swerves from the just moderation in polemics, and in its extreme course frequently expunges, together with the foreign elements, much that is genuine and good. But the unsatisfied want which both these tendencies leave in men of profounder and warmer feelings, usually gives rise to another reaction—

the reaction of a preëminently subjective tendency, which would give a paramount authority to the feelings and to intuitive judgments, and, as opposed to the tendencies above described, is designated by the name of mysticism. These three main directions of the religious spirit, which, under different forms, often recur, may be respectively recognised in the present case in the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes.

The Pharisees\* stood at the head of legal Judaism. They fenced round the Mosaic law with a multitude of so-called "hedges," whereby its precepts were to be guarded against every possible infringement. And under this pretext they added many new statutes, particularly to the ritual portion of the law. These, by an arbitrary method of interpretation—a method which in part tortured the letter and in part was allegorical—they contrived to find in the Pentateuch. But at the same time they appealed to an oral tradition as furnishing both the key to a right exposition of it, and also the authority for their doctrines. By the people they were venerated as holy men, and they stood at the head of the hierarchy. An asceticism, alien to the original Hebrew spirit, but capable of readily uniting with the greatest extravagances of legal sectarianism, was by them wrought into a system. We find among them much that is similar to the *consiliis evangelicis*, and to the rules of Monachism in the later church. On painful ceremonial observances they often laid greater stress than on good morals. To a rigid austerity in avoiding even the slightest appearance of transgressing the ritual precepts, they united an easy sophistical casuistry which skilfully excused many a violation of the moral law. Besides those who made it their particular business to interpret the law and its supplemental traditions, there was also among them a party who, by allegorical interpretation, contrived to introduce into the Old Testament a peculiar Theosophy which they propagated in their schools. Starting from the development of certain ideas which the Old Testament really contained in the germ,

\* The name is derived from "parash," פָּרַשׁ; either in the sense "to expound," whence "poresh," פּוֹרֵשׁ, the ἐξήγητής τοῦ νομοῦ κατ' ἐξουσίαν, a title claimed by the Pharisees, according to Josephus; or in the sense "to set apart," "parush," פָּרוּשׁ, which indeed sounds nearer to the Greek φαρμακός, "one separated from the profane multitude," the עַם הַפָּאָרִיז "one who wished to be regarded as holy."



they formed their system by combining with it many elements derived from Zoroastrian or Parsic opinions; and at a later period (after the time of Gamaliel) with much also that they borrowed from Platonism. Thus to a ritual and legal tradition a speculative and theosophic one was added.\*

It would be as wrong, certainly, to confound these Pharisees together in one class as it would be to pursue such a course with the later monks. Among them we must distinguish the several gradations from an honest though misguided zeal down to the mock-holiness and hypocrisy which thirsted only for power. Although with many the selfish interest of an hierarchical caste was the governing principle, yet there were some for whom the legal way of thinking, with all its rigorous observances and conflicts, possessed perfect truth; some who, in their course of life, had passed through the painful experiences which Paul, the former Pharisee, describes in the seventh chapter of his Epistle to the Romans. But one thing was wanting to them—the humility with which those who feel the poverty of their own spirit go forth to meet the divine grace.

The Sadducees, on the other hand, desired to restore the Mosaic religion to its original purity, and to expunge whatever had been added by Pharisaic traditions. But as they refused to follow the thread of *historical progress which marked the development* of the divine revelations, and arbitrarily cut it short, so they could not understand the *original Theism* in the Jewish religion. That direction of mind which shows hostility to the progressive development of the religious consciousness, required by what was already contained or implied in the original, inevitably misunderstands the original itself—never fails to seize it on one side exclusively and to mutilate it. The Sadducees were too deficient in a profound sense of religion and of the religious need, to be able to distinguish the genuine from the spurious in the Pharisaic theology.

Directly at variance as were the two systems of Phariseeism and Sadduceeism, they yet had something in common. This was the one-sided legal principle which they both maintained.

\* In what is here said I have taken into view the well-grounded objections which Dr. Schneckenburger, in the seventh Dissertation of his Introduction to the New Testament, has made against the manner in which the subject was presented by me before.

And by the Sadducees, indeed, this principle was seized and held in a manner still more exclusively one-sided than by the other sect; since with them *all* religious interest was confined *to this one point*, and they misinterpreted or denied everything else that belonged to the more fully developed faith of the Old Testament. Moreover, the essential character of the law in its spirit, as distinguished from its national and temporal form, in its strictness and dignity, was recognised by them still less than by the Pharisees. While the Pharisees attributed the highest value to the righteousness of ritual and ascetical works, with the Sadducees—as, perhaps, the name they gave themselves may denote—uprightness in the relations of civil society was everything. Starting from this principle, there was nothing in their view of morality which presented a point of contact for the feeling of *religious* need, which most readily emerges from *the depth* of the moral life. Add to this, that to the Pentateuch alone did they ascribe a divine authority—an authority binding on religious conviction.\* The observance of the law,

\* Ready as I am to acknowledge the weight of the arguments brought by Winer (in his *Biblische Realwörterbuch*) against the statement here made, yet I cannot be induced to abandon it. Very true, it does not admit of being proved from the passages of Josephus that the Sadducees denied the authority of all other books of the canon. All that is proved by those passages is that they were opponents of tradition, and were for deriving the substance of the legal precepts which must be observed from the letter of the law alone, without allowing validity, in this regard, to any other source of knowledge. But neither can it, by any means, be proved from them that they judged respecting the canon precisely as did the Pharisees. Although Josephus, (c. Apion. c. 8,) taking his position on the ground of Jewish orthodoxy, might thus describe the canon as of universal validity, yet it by no means follows that that heterodox sect, which departed in so many other things from what was elsewhere considered as important for the religious interest, that this sect might not also differ from the latter in their judgment concerning the canon. If the Sadducees, notwithstanding their denial of doctrines so important to the general religious interest as those of personal immortality and of the resurrection, could yet attain to the most considerable offices of the state, was it likely that an opinion concerning the canon, which certainly had no such vital connection with practical life, should form an obstacle to this promotion? Josephus says of them that, when they were called to administer public affairs, they did not venture to act according to their own principles, but were constrained to show a deference to the principles of the Pharisees; for otherwise they must incur the popular rage, which would inevitably be excited against them. Ὅποτε γὰρ ἐπ' ἀρχαὶς παρίσθουν, ἀκούσιως μὲν καὶ κατ' ἀνάγκην, πρὸς χωρῶν δ' οὐκ εἰς ὁ φερισσαῖος



understood after *their own* way, was for them the only thing fixed and certain; in respect to all other things they were inclined to doubt and disputation.\*

As a belief in the spirit's destination for an eternal and super-terrestrial existence found no congenial element in their tone of mind, which was at once rationalistic and worldly, the Sadducees expressly denied the doctrines of the resurrection and of the immortality of the soul, because they could not be proved from the simple letter of the Pentateuch. These doctrines they therefore classed among the foreign additions to the original teaching of Moses, from which they were anxious to purify Judaism. It is always a distinctive mark of such a direction of mind that it declares all doctrines to be surreptitious which are not *literally* expressed in the still acknowledged records of religion, however they may be implied in their spirit, which contains within itself the germ out of which they were subsequently developed. But it is more difficult to conceive how the Sadducees found it possible to reconcile their denial of a world of spirits and of the existence of angels†—to which denial, however, they were impelled by the same direction of mind—with their principle of admitting everything as religious doctrine which could be shown to exist in so many words in the Pentateuch. It is easy to see here how, for their opinions,

λέγει, διὰ τὸ μὴ ἄλλως ἀνεκτοῦς γενέσθαι τοῖς πλῆθεσιν. Archæol. l. XVIII. c. 1, s. 4. These words without doubt refer immediately to church principles of administration; yet I cannot avoid the inference from analogy that the Sadducees would have acted in precisely the same way in regard to other things not less important in their relation to the common religious interest—such, for instance, as their denial of immortality; that is, would have made no public demonstration of their real convictions. Although, in such a case, it must necessarily have happened, that, with such difference of opinions, violent contentions would sometimes arise in the Sanhedrim. See Acts 23, 9. So then, there may have been a distinction of an exoteric and esoteric position in their judgment concerning the canon. While manifesting a certain respect for the whole canon, they may have, notwithstanding this, ascribed a decisive authority, in matters of faith, to the Pentateuch alone. Indeed, it cannot well be conceived how they could reconcile the acknowledgment of an equal authority belonging to all the books of the Old Testament with their denial of immortality and of the resurrection.

\* Josephus describes the sceptical tendency of the Sadducees in Archæol. l. XVIII. c. 1, s. 4: Φυλακῆς δὲ οὐδαμῶν τιμῶν μεταποίησις αὐτοῖς ἢ τῶν νόμων. Πρὸς γὰρ τοὺς διδασκάλους σοφίας ἦν μετίασιν, ἀμφιλογεῖν ἀρετὴν ἀριθμῶσιν.

† Acts 23, 8.

which had originated and were grounded in a state of mind wholly peculiar to themselves, they only sought, so far as the case admitted, a point of union and support in the authority which they recognised. Most probably, in explaining the angelic appearances (the Angelophaniai), they departed from their principle of literal interpretation, and considered them merely as visions by which God revealed himself to the Fathers.\*

Although it cannot be proved, from the notices of Josephus, that they denied a special Providence, yet it is clear that, in strict conformity with their tendency to negation, they made God, as far as possible, an idle spectator of the affairs of the world, taking much less share in the concerns of men than the Theocratic principle required. Thus their way of thinking gradually approximated to a Deism which denied all revelation, and consequently, also, the very essence of the Jewish religion itself, though at the outset they had simply in view the restoration of that religion to its primitive simplicity. The principle of their intellectual bias must have led them further than they intended themselves to go. In perfect harmony with this mode of thinking was the severe, cold, heartless disposition which Josephus ascribes to the Sadducees. According to his account, they were for the most part persons of wealth, who led a life of ease, and, satisfied with earthly enjoyments, closed their minds against all higher aspirations.†

\* As we must infer from Origen's words compared with a passage in Justin Martyr (Dialog. c. Tryph. Jud. f. 358, ed. Colon), where he speaks of a party among the Jewish theologians that denied the personal existence of angels, and explained all appearances of them as merely transient forms of the manifestation of a divine power, which God caused to go out from himself and then withdrew. Origen, in the words alluded to, ascribes to the Sadducees, *δόξας περὶ ἀγγέλων, ὡς οὐχ ὑπαρχόντων, ἀλλὰ τροπολογουμένων τῶν περὶ αὐτῶν ἀναγεγραμμένων καὶ μηδὲν ὡς πρὸς τὴν ἱστορίαν ἀληθεῖς ἔχόντων*. It may admit of question whether Origen was here following some historical records, or merely allowing himself to conclude, from the necessary connection of ideas in his own mode of thinking, that if they did not ascribe literal truth to the narratives of the angelic appearances, they must then have explained them allegorically. The comparison of his statement however with that of Justin Martyr renders the former the more probable.

† Although Josephus was himself a Pharisee, yet we have no reason to suspect what he says of the Sadducees, for he constantly shows himself impartial in his judgments; he moreover frequently exposes, without



It now remains for us to speak of the Essenes or Essæans, whose relation to the two parties just described has already been exhibited in a general manner. About two centuries before the birth of Christ, there arose, in the quiet country lying on the west side of the Dead Sea, a society of piously disposed men, who sought in these solitudes a refuge from reigning corruptions, from the strifes of parties, and the storms and conflicts of the world. Their society sprang up precisely as the monastic system did at a later period. They are thus described by the elder Pliny, who felt constrained to express a sort of respect for their independence and their contentment within themselves:—"On the western border of that lake dwell the Essenes, at a sufficient distance from the shore to avoid its pestilent effluvia—a race entirely by themselves, and, beyond every other in the world, deserving of wonder; men living in communion with nature; without wives, without money. Every day their number is replenished by a new troop of settlers, since they are much visited by those whom the reverses of fortune have driven, tired of the world, to their modes of living. Thus happens what might seem incredible, that a community in which no one is born, yet continues to subsist through the lapse of centuries. So fruitful for them is disgust of life in others."\* From this first seat of the Essenes, colonies had been formed in other parts of Palestine; they settled not only in remote and solitary districts of the country, which must have answered best to their original design, but also in the midst of villages and towns. The planting of such colonies would naturally lead to many deviations from the original strictness of their principles and many

reserve, the bad traits of the Pharisees, and we have no cause, therefore, to charge him here with malicious feelings, injurious to the truth. Certainly we cannot infer from the character of the doctrines of the later Karaites, who were temperate opponents of the Pharisaic traditions, what must have been the character of the Sadducean doctrines. The general question still remains unsettled, whether the latter doctrines had any outward connection with the former, although the heresy-hunting spirit of their adversaries would naturally be glad of the chance to confound them with these.

\* *Ab occidente litora Esseni fugiunt, usque qua nocent. Gens sola et in toto orbe præter cæteras mira, sine ulla femina, omni venere abdicata, sine pecunia, socia palmarum. In diem ex æquo convenarum turba renascitur, large frequentantibus, quos vitâ fessos ad mores eorum fortunæ fluctus agit.* Natur. Hist. l. V. c. 15.

alterations of their discipline. If, as we may gather from the statements of Josephus, there was one class of Essenes who were willing to act as magistrates, it is evident that, residing in civil society, they must have found it impossible to observe all the rules which bound with the force of law such as lived secluded from human intercourse. As is wont to happen in similar communities, there must in this case have naturally sprung up many orders of the sect, various forms of relation to, and modes of connection with, the original society. Indeed, the historian Josephus expressly distinguishes four different orders among the Essenes.\* And thus many contradictory statements which occur in the several accounts of this sect admit of being easily reconciled.†

If among mystic sects we may always distinguish the more practical and the more speculatively inclined, we must reckon the Essenes with the former class, only we must not overlook the existence among them of a certain speculative and Theosophic element. This, their peculiar mystic turn, might have sprung up in the first place, independently of external influence, out of a profound veneration of the Old Testament, a spiritualization of the letter, which had its root in the same temper of mind which gave birth to allegorical interpretation. Such mysticism has made its appearance after much the same manner among people of the most diverse character,—among Hindoos, Persians, and Christians. It would lead certainly to great mistakes if, from the resemblance of such religious phenomena, whose relationship can be traced to a common ground of origin in the nature of the human mind itself, we were to go on and to infer their outward derivation from each other.

\* Josephus cites *μείρας τέσσαρας* of Essenes, B. J. l. II. c. 8, s. 10, which several grades, it is true, would, according to his testimony, have reference simply to the length of time spent in this community; but from the marks which are given we may doubtless infer that there were other modes of classification among them besides that which bore reference to the circumstance just mentioned.

† As, for instance, while Pliny makes them reside only on the border of the Dead Sea, Josephus (de B. J. l. II. c. 8, s. 4) says that there were many of them dwelling in every town; Philo (quod omnis probus liber, s. 12) that they lived *καμηδόν, τὰς πόλεις ἐκτρεπόμενοι*; and the same writer, in a fragment of his defence of the Jews, preserved by Eusebius Cæsar (Præparat. Evangel. l. VII. c. 8), that they lived in many towns and villages of Judea, in populous districts.



How much that is similar might we not find on comparing the phenomena of Brahmaism and Buddhism with those of the sect of Beghards in the middle ages, where the impossibility of any such derivation is apparent to everybody! Still it must be admitted that although the mysticism of the Essenes did not originally owe its rise to any outward exciting cause, yet, having once sprung up, it adopted many foreign elements. But should the question now arise—Whence did these elements come? we find our thoughts reverting far more naturally to old Oriental, to Parsic, Chaldaic elements (many ideas from that source having been propagated among the Jews since the time of the captivity), than to elements of Alexandrian Platonism. For although this is the usual supposition at the present time, it is difficult to conceive how the latter could already have exerted so powerful and wide-extended an influence in Palestine at the period when the sect arose. The peculiar asceticism of the Essenes by no means warrants us to infer that they must have been acquainted with the Platonic doctrine of the *ὑλη*, since it may be quite as well explained by the influence of the Oriental ideas; while the former, without the addition of the latter, would have led to no such peculiar bent. Due consideration should moreover be given to the fact that Josephus and Philo (writers to whom we are chiefly indebted for our information respecting this sect) have both—the latter however still more than the former—clothed the opinions of the Essenes in a garb peculiarly Grecian, which we may rightly regard as not originally belonging to them. We must therefore be cautious how we attribute much importance to many things they advance, which can only be owing to that circumstance; especially as in modern times the Essenean doctrines have similarly given occasion to arbitrary combinations and modes of representing historical facts.

Besides the diversities above mentioned, which must have been introduced gradually among the Essenes as they began to relax more and more from their primitive eremetical severity and to submit to the intercourse of civil life, we may notice another remarkable difference among them. A life of celibacy was in strict accordance with the Oriental element of their original ascetic turn; but this was an institution totally alien to the spirit of the primitive Hebraism, by which a fruitful mar-

riage was reckoned among the greatest blessings and ornaments of life. Accordingly we trace among the Essenes a reaction of the original Hebrew mind against this foreign ascetical element, analogous to something which we shall hereafter have frequent occasion to notice in the history of sects. There was a party of the Essenes which differed from the others by tolerating the institution of marriage.\*

It accorded with the character of this sect that they should combine the contemplative life with the practical; but, from accommodation to the diversities already mentioned, the extent to which this was done must also have been various. The practical bent of the Essenes would naturally incline them to a life of industry. Such a life was probably intended in their case, as in that of the later monks, to answer a two-fold purpose—to occupy the senses so as to prevent any disturbance from that quarter to the higher activity of the mind; and to supply them with the means, while independently providing for their own subsistence, of contributing at the same time to the necessities of others. Peaceful were the occupations with which they in every instance employed themselves; although they differed according to their different habits of life, according as they held communion with nature alone or shared in the intercourse of civil society. Agriculture, the breeding of bees and of cattle, and mechanical handiworks, were their principal avocations. They also sought to explore the powers of nature, and apply them to the healing of diseases. Connected with their secret doctrines was a traditional knowledge relating to this subject. They were in possession of old writings which treated of such matters. Health of body and of soul they were in the habit of connecting together, as well as the cure of both. Their science of nature and their art of medicine seem to have had a religious, *Theosophic* character.† As they strove to investigate the secret powers of nature, so also were there found among them some who claimed for themselves, and endeavoured to cultivate, a gift of prophecy. Among their secret traditions was a particular method of

\* See Joseph. B. J. l. II. c. 8, s. 13.

† Joseph. B. J. l. II. c. 8, s. 6: Σπουδάζουσιν ἐκτόπως περὶ τὰ τῶν παλαιῶν συγγράμματα, μάλιστα τὰ πρὸς ἀφίλειαν ψυχῆς καὶ σώματος ἐκλέγοντες. "Ἐνθὲν αὐτοῖς πρὸς θεραπείαν παθῶν ῥίζαι τε ἀλεξήτορι καὶ λειψῶν ιδιότητες ἐνεργεῖν ὄνται.



ascetical preparation, which should qualify those who followed it to search into the future.\* For this purpose they employed sacred writings in a way similar to that in which at a later time the Bible has been used for a like purpose. From the words of these works—whether they were the Scriptures of the Old Testament or others in which the secret doctrines of their sect were unfolded—they sought by various interpretations to unravel the secrets of futurity. All this bears the impress of the old Oriental spirit, certainly not of the elements of Grecian culture.

By a conviction of a higher dignity common to the whole human race—of the oneness of the divine image in all (to which the Old Testament of itself might have led them)†—they rose above the narrow limits within which the development of the human species was confined by the prejudices of antiquity. They considered all men as rational beings, destined to the enjoyment of personal freedom; they condemned slavery and suffered no slave to exist in their community, mutually helping one another in every kind of service. As it was their design to restore the community originally founded by the Almighty in nature, and thereby to remove the differences which civil society had introduced among men, the distinctions of poverty and of wealth were abolished in their fraternity. They had a common treasury, formed by throwing together the property of such as entered into the society, and by the earnings of each man's labour. Out of it the wants of all were provided for. This community of goods, however, did not preclude the right of private property, and was, moreover, in all probability, modified by the diversities already described.

\* Διαφόροις ἀγνίαις ἐμπαιδοτριβοῦμενων. See Joseph. B. J. I. II. c. 8, s. 12.

† This view naturally resulted both from the development of the Old Testament idea respecting the image of God, and from the recognition of the origin of mankind from a single pair; as, on the contrary, slavery found its justification in the prevailing mode of thinking among Pagans; their misapprehension of the higher nature common to the species, and their assumption of an original difference of races, in virtue of which some, by their reason, were destined and suited to rule over others, and these latter, with their bodily powers, to serve them as tools. Thus Aristotle, in his work on Politics, I. I. c. 2, says, Τὸ μὲν δυνάμενον τῇ διανοίᾳ προορᾶν ἀρχὸν φύσει καὶ δεσπόζον φύσει. Τὸ δὲ δυνάμενον τῇ σάματι ταῦτα ποιεῖν ἀρχόμενον καὶ φύσει δοῦλον.

There can be no doubt that this sect, by exciting a more earnest and lively spirit of devotion, by arousing the sense of the godlike within the little circles over which their influence extended, produced those wholesome fruits which have always sprung out of practical mysticism, wherever the religious life has become stiffened into mechanical forms. Owing to their inoffensive mode of life, which commanded universal respect, they were enabled, without molestation, to preserve and extend themselves, amidst all the strifes of party and all the revolutions to which Palestine was subjected, down to the extinction of the Jewish state.

The Essenes were in that corrupt age particularly distinguished among the Jews for their industry, charitableness, and hospitality; for their fidelity, so different from the seditious spirit of the Jews, in rendering obedience to magistrates as the powers ordained of God; and also for their strict veracity. Every *yea* and *nay* possessed in their society the force of an oath; for every oath, said they, presupposes a mutual distrust, which ought not to find place in a community of honest men. Only in one case might an oath be administered among them, and then it was taken as a pledge from those who, after a novitiate of three years, were to be received among the number of the initiated.

Now although, in the sketch just presented of this sect, we cannot fail to recognise a sound practical bent, yet we should doubtless lie under a great mistake, if, led by the one-sided representations of the Alexandrian Jew, Philo,\* we were to look

\* In his writings, above cited. Josephus also, as we have already observed, has given nothing that can be called an objective description of this sect; notwithstanding that, when a youth of sixteen, he compared the different Jewish sects together, in order to choose between them, and endeavoured, along with the rest, to make himself acquainted with the sect of the Essenes. Although, however, he hardly went beyond the period of a novitiate among them, and perhaps, in regard to their esoteric doctrines, was no better informed than Philo, yet he *might* obtain a more accurate knowledge of the sect than the Alexandrian Jew. On the whole his account, savouring as it does with a smack of the Grecian taste, yet wears a more historical character than that of Philo, which was evidently written with the distinct purpose in view of holding up the Essenes to the Greeks as a pattern of practical sages. Indeed, the latter writer was scarcely capable of looking at anything but by the light of his Alexandrian Platonism. He must involuntarily find his own ideas wherever any point of union enables him to introduce them.



upon the Essenes as an example of the purest practical mystics, as far removed, on the one hand, from all Theosophic and speculative fancies,\* as, on the other, from all superstition and slavish addiction to ceremonies. The fact which we have already noticed, of their pretending to a gift of prophecy, is, of itself, inconsistent with this view of the matter. Their secret lore, moreover, can hardly be supposed to have consisted simply of ethical elements, and we are forced to the supposition of a peculiar *Theosophy* and Pneumatology. Why else should they have made so great a mystery of it? This supposition, indeed, gains strength when we learn that, among other obligations, the candidates for admission into the sect bound themselves by an oath never to reveal to any one the *names of the angels* which were about to be communicated to them. It is confirmed again by the cautious secrecy with which they kept their ancient books. Even Philo himself makes it probable, when he says that they busied themselves with a φιλοσοφία διὰ συμβόλων, a philosophy which was based on the allegorical interpretation of the Bible; since such modes of the allegorizing of Scripture are invariably associated with a speculative system. There is nothing to warrant us in supposing that it was the ideas of the Alexandrian Theology which constituted the basis of their scheme. On the contrary, a fundamental element in this *Theosophy* of theirs seems to have been a certain veneration of the sun, which we can only explain from the intermingling of Parsic rather than of Platonic doctrines. It was their daily custom to turn their faces devoutly towards the rising of the sun, and chant together certain ancient hymns, traditional to their sect, which were addressed to that luminary, purporting that his beams ought to fall upon nothing impure.† To this may be added their doctrine concerning the soul's preëxistence. Descended from some heavenly region, it had become imprisoned in this

\* I cannot at all agree with those who seize upon the words of Philo, in his book *Quod omnis probus liber*, s. 12, where he says, that of the three parts of philosophy, the Essenes accepted only Ethics, for the purpose of sketching out, after this hint, the main features of the Essenean system. It is impossible not to see that in these words the matter is set forth in an altogether subjective point of view; and besides, what Philo here asserts is contradicted by the more precise and accurate testimony of Josephus.

† Joseph. de B. J. l. II. c. 8, s. 8 et 9.

corporeal world, and, after having led a life worthy of its celestial origin, it would be liberated again, and rise to a heavenly existence befitting its nature. This, which was the fundamental doctrine of their asceticism, may also just as well be traced to an old Oriental tradition as to the Alexandrian Platonism. The original birthplace of this doctrine is, in truth, the East, from which quarter it first found its way into Greece.

If we may trust the words of Josephus,\* they did indeed send gifts to the temple, and thus expressed their reverence for the original establishment. Discharging in this manner the common duty of all Jews, in obedience to their principle of fulfilling every obligation that bound them, they nevertheless did not visit the temple themselves,† perhaps because they looked upon it as polluted by the vicious customs of the Jews. They thought that the holy rites could be performed in a worthier and more acceptable manner within the precincts of their own thoroughly pure and holy community. Here, too, they also performed their sacrificial offerings, for the presentation of which, they believed themselves best prepared by their ascetic lustrations within the pale of their own society. The authority of Moses standing so high with them as it did, there is not the least reason for supposing they would wholly set aside the sacrificial worship appointed by him, unless, perhaps, they looked upon the original Mosaic religion as having been corrupted by later additions, and among these additions reckoned also the sacrificial worship, as we find it asserted in the Clementines. This, however, so far at least as it regards the Essenes, admits not of the shadow of a proof. Now it is singular, we must allow, that, as Jews, they could ever entertain the opinion that it was lawful for them to offer sacrifices away from Jerusalem. But, in truth, caprice in the treatment of whatever belongs to the positive in religion forms one of the most characteristic marks of all such mystic sects. And it is in nowise inconsistent with the spirit of such a sect, that in proportion as they looked upon the sacrificial worship,

\* Archæol. l. XVIII. s. 4; Εἰς δὲ τὸ ἱερὸν ἀναθήματά τι στέλλοντες θυσίας οὐκ ἐπιτελοῦσι διαφορῶσθετι ἀγνείων. ὅς νομίζουσιν, καὶ δι' αὐτὸ εἰργόμενοι τοῦ κοινοῦ τεμενίσματος, ἐφ' αὐτῶν τὰς θυσίας ἐπιτελοῦσι.

† For the word *εἰργόμενοι* cannot possibly be taken in any other sense than that of the middle voice.



instituted by Moses, as a holy service, they should be the less disposed to take any part in its celebration amidst the wickedness of the desecrated temple at Jerusalem; and that they should maintain that, among the really sanctified (the members of their own sect) was the true spiritual temple, where sacrifices could be offered with the proper consecration.\*

With such mystical sects it not unfrequently happens, that a wholly spiritual and inward direction is most incongruously associated with an exaggerated estimate of the value of the outward practices of religion. So it was with the Essenes; two opposite elements were by them brought into contact—spiritual religion and slavery to forms. In a painfully superstitious observance of the Sabbath, according to the letter, not the spirit, of the law, they went even beyond the Jews. There was one difference, however, in the custom: in their case their scruples sprang out of a sincere piety, while the

\* Even from Philo's language in the tract *Quod omnis probus liber*, s. 12, it is impossible to extract that meaning which some have wished to find in it: viz. that the Essenes gave a spiritual interpretation to the whole sacrificial worship, and rejected outward sacrifices entirely. Ἐπειδὴ καὶ ἐν τοῖς μάλιστα θεραπεύται θεοῦ γεγονόσιν, οὐ ζῶα καταθύοντες, ἀλλ' ἱεροπρεπεῖς τὰς ἑαυτῶν διανοίας κατασκευάζειν ἀξιούντες. Philo is starting here from the doctrine of the Alexandrian theology, that the true worship of God is purely spiritual, and consists in the consecration of the life of the spirit to God. This idea he represents as having been realized by the Essenes, whom he describes as *Therapeutæ*, in the true sense of the word. Simply for the sake of contrast, he mentions animal sacrifices, which were usually held to constitute the main part of the temple service; and in so doing he by no means affirms that the Essenes had entirely rejected sacrificial worship. Not the negative but the positive is here the essential point. Had it been his intention to say that the Essenes rejected the sacrificial worship of Moses, he must have expressed this in a quite different tone. In *this* connection, Philo could have said the same thing of himself, and of every other Jew, possessed, according to his opinion, of a truly spiritual mind. By attaining to the knowledge that the true sacrifice is the spiritual sacrifice of one's self, one is not led, certainly, according to his doctrine, to set aside the outward sacrificial worship. In this case, therefore, there is not the least opposition betwixt Philo and Josephus, but he is speaking of an entirely different thing. In the passage cited from Josephus we cannot, for the purpose of reconciling a contradiction that does not exist, understand "sacrifice" in the *second* instance differently from that in the *first*, as referring to bloodless sacrifices—the symbolical offerings of the gifts of nature. In this case, Josephus would have expressed the antithesis in a different manner.

casuistry of the Pharisees gave a milder or stricter interpretation of the law, to meet the interests of the passing moment. Not only did they, like other Jews, carefully avoid all contact with uncircumcised persons; but as, within their own body, they were separated into four different grades, they who had attained to the highest dreaded the pollution of a touch from the member of an inferior grade. Whenever an accident of this sort occurred they had recourse to ablutions. In general they attached greater importance than the rest of their nation to purification, and bathed frequently in cold water as a means of holiness. To their ascetical notions, the oriental and healthful practice of anointing with oil seemed an unholy thing; whoever, therefore, happened by any means to become thus defiled, felt obliged carefully to cleanse himself. They scrupulously avoided all food which had not been prepared within their own sect. They would die rather than partake of any other. These facts, then, are proof enough that we should greatly err if, out of respect for the religious spirit of this sect, we were to go on and consider them the representatives of a simple and unalloyed practical mysticism.

Essentially different from the form of culture which prevailed in Palestine was the shape and direction taken by the Jewish mind on that spot where, through a period of three centuries, it had been unfolding itself under altered circumstances and relations—amidst those elements of Hellenic culture, that, transplanted into the aboriginal seats of a wholly different civilization, had on this foreign soil gained the supremacy—in the Grecian colony of Alexandria in Egypt. Intercourse of Greek and Jewish minds in this city gave rise to one of the most influential of those phenomena which have had an eminently important bearing on the development of Christianity *in human thought*. We here discern how that great historical event, which, more than three hundred years before the birth of Christ, shook to their foundations the kingdoms of the East, served to prepare the way for such a process. The world-subduing armies of Alexander, as afterwards the legions of Rome, were subservient to the supreme end of history, by uniting and bringing within the influence of each other regions previously separated, so that the minds of men might be prepared to meet Christianity, to adopt it in



thought, and to work it out with self-activity. Plutarch looked upon it as the great mission of Alexander to transplant Grecian culture into distant countries,\* and to conciliate Greeks and barbarians, and to fuse them into one. He says of him, not without reason, that he was sent of God for this purpose; † though the historian did not divine that this end itself was only subsidiary to, and the means of, one still higher—the making, viz., the united peoples of the East and West more accessible to the new creation which was to proceed from Christianity, and by the combination of the elements of Oriental and Hellenic culture the preparing for Christianity a material in which it might develop itself. If we overlook this ulterior end, and do not fix our regards on the higher quickening spirit destined to reanimate, for some new end, that combination which already bore within itself a germ of corruption, we might well doubt whether that union was really a gain to either party; whether, at least, it was not everywhere attended with a correspondent loss. For the fresh vigour which it infused into the old national spirit must have been constantly repressed by the violence which the foreign element did to it. To introduce into that combination a new living principle of development, and, without prejudice to their original essence, to unite peculiarities the most diverse into a whole in which each part should be a complement to the other, required something higher than *any* element of human culture. The true living communion between the East and the West, which should combine together the two peculiar principles that were equally necessary for a complete exhibition of the type of humanity, could first come only from Christianity. But still, as preparatory thereto, the influence which, for three centuries, went forth from Alexandria, that centre of the intercourse of the world, was of great importance.

As in the course of these centuries the peculiar asperity and rigidity of the Jewish character must have been considerably tempered by intercourse with the Greeks, ‡ and by the transforming influence of the Hellenic culture, which here

\* Τὰ βαρβαρικά τοῖς ἑλληνικοῖς κερᾶσαι, καὶ τὴν ἑλλάδα σπείραι. See Plutarch's I. orat. de Alex. virtute s. fortuna, s. 10.

† Κοινὸς ἦκειν θεῶθεν ἀρμοστής καὶ διαλλακτὴς τῶν ὅλων νομίζων. L. c. c. 6.

‡ Philo reckons the number of Jews residing in Alexandria and the countries adjacent at "a hundred myriads." Orat. in Flaccum, s. 6.

preponderated, its ultimate effect might have been of two kinds. Either the religious feeling, which so strongly marked the Jewish temperament, might decay under the overpowering influence of foreign habits of thinking and foreign culture, and the Jews, in consequence, might be seduced into joining the Greeks, among whom they dwelt, in ridiculing their old religious records, now become unintelligible to them; or else, true in the main to the religion of their fathers, they might be driven to look for some means of reconciling the latter with the Hellenic learning, which exercised an involuntary power over their minds, and which, moreover, for apologetic purposes, they were induced to make their own.

Doubtless there are some indications of the former result. Thus that zealous champion of Judaism, the Alexandrian Philo, could contrast with Moses, who, while in favour at the Egyptian court, remained faithful to his people, certain renegades\* "who trample under foot the laws in which they were born and bred, subvert the customs of their country which were liable to no just censure, and, in their predilection for the new, are utterly forgetful of the old." In another passage† he rebukes those "who are impatient of the religious institutions of their country; who are ever on the look-out for matter of censure and complaint against the laws of religion; who, in excuse of their ungodliness, thoughtlessly urge the following or similar objections:‡ Do ye still make great account of your laws, as if they contained the rules of truth? Yet see, the holy Scriptures, as you term them, contain also fables, such as you are accustomed to laugh at when you hear them from others."§

\* De vita Mosis, l. I. f. 607, s. 9. Νόμους παραβαίνουσι, καθ' οὓς ἐγενήθησαν καὶ ἐτάφησαν, ἧδη δὲ πάτρια, οἷς μάλιστα οὐδεμία πρόσσεται δικαία, κινούσιν ἰνδιτημένοι καὶ διὰ τὴν τῶν παρόντων ἀποδοχὴν οὐδενὸς ἔτι τῶν ἀρχαίων μνήμην λαμβάνουσιν.

† De confus. ling. f. 320, s. 5. Οἱ μὲν δυσχεραίνοντες τῇ πατρίῳ πολιτείᾳ, ψόγον καὶ κατηγόριαν αἰὶ τῶν νόμων μελεπῶντες τούτοις καὶ τοῖς παραπληροῖς, ὡς ἂν ἐπιβάντες τῆς ἀδύτητης αὐτῶν οἱ δυσσεβεῖς χῶνται.

‡ He is speaking of the confusion of tongues at Babel.

§ In the passage (de nom. mutat. p. 1053, s. 8) where Philo quotes the scoffing language of an ἄθεος and ἀσεβής, the bitterness with which he speaks would seem to indicate that the scoffer was an infidel Jew. In a pagan this scoffing would not have struck him as anything singular. He looks upon it as a punishment of the foolishness of this man, that he soon after hung himself; ἦν ὁ μισαρὸς καὶ δυσκάταρκτος μηδὲ κυδάρης θανάτω



On the whole, however, the power of religious faith, so deeply rooted in the mind of this people, was too great to be weakened by the influence of foreign learning. The former, therefore, of its two effects we alluded to above as possible, was certainly the more rare, and the latter the more frequent case. Accordingly, the Jews, completely imbued with the elements of Hellenic culture, endeavoured to find a mean between it and the religion of their fathers, which they had no wish to renounce. To this end they availed themselves of the system most in vogue with those who, in Alexandria, busied themselves with religious matters—that of the Platonic philosophy, which had already acquired a mighty influence over their own intellectual life. At the same time they were very far from consciously entertaining the idea or wish to sacrifice the authority of their ancient religion and sacred writings to the authority of a merely human philosophy. On the contrary, from a comparison of the religious knowledge existing among their own people with that which was to be found among the Egyptians and Greeks, they had learned to appreciate more fully the eminent character of their ancient religion, the divine agency manifested in the fortunes of their nation, and its destiny, as bearing upon the whole human race. Indeed, their conviction that this was in fact the high destination of the Jews, could only be raised and confirmed by such a comparison. This, at least, is the opinion of the individual whom we would choose to name as the representative of these Alexandrians, viz. Philo.\* “That,” he says, “which is the portion only of a few disciples of a truly genuine philosophy, the knowledge of the Highest, has by law and custom become the inheritance of the whole Jewish people;” and he calls the

τελευταίη. By means of an allegorical interpretation Philo wished to explain away that which furnished this man an occasion for his scoffing, that others might not draw upon themselves a like punishment. He describes here a whole class of such people, who were waging an irreconcilable war with sacred things, and searching for matter of calumny wherever the letter admitted of no befitting sense. “Ἐνιοὶ τῶν φιλαπεχθνημόνων καὶ μῶμους ἀεὶ τοῖς ἀμώμοις προσάπτειν ἐθελόντων καὶ πόλεμον ἀκήρυκτον πολεμούντων τοῖς ἱεροῖς.

\* De caritate, f. 699, s. 2: “Ὅπερ ἐκ φιλοσοφίας τῆς δοκιμωτάτης περιγίνεται τοῖς ὁμιληταῖς αὐτῆς, τοῦτο καὶ διὰ νόμων καὶ ἐδῶν Ἰουδαίοις, ἐπιστήμη τοῦ ἀνωτάτου καὶ πρεσβυτάτου πάντων, τὸν ἐπὶ τοῖς γενητοῖς θεοῖς πλάνον ἀπωσμήνοις.

Jews priests and prophets for all mankind.\* He was conscious of the relation to universal history which lay at the bottom of all that was special and particular in the history of his nation, and saw how the Theocratic people, as such, had a mission to fulfil which regarded the whole of humanity. He describes them as a priestly people, whose calling it was to invoke the blessing of God on mankind.† He says, with this reference, that the offering, presented for the whole people, was meant for the entire race of man.‡

The spirit of Judaism enabled him to understand that religious truth should be a public thing, the common property of all. When we consider how easily a Jew at Alexandria might be tempted by the inducements which the traffic in religious mysteries held out, to set up another description of mysteries in competition with those of the Greeks, the decided stand which Philo made against such a tendency appears highly remarkable, and distinguishes him, in this respect, from the heathen Platonists. It almost seems that he had found cause to warn his fellow-believers against the fascinations of mystery, by which they were in danger of being attracted.§ "All mysteries," says he, "all parade and trickery of that sort, Moses removed from his holy legislation; since he was unwilling that such as were trained under such a religious policy, should, by having their minds dazzled with mysterious things, be exposed to the temptation of neglecting the truth, and of following after that which belongs to night and darkness, to the disregard of what is worthy of the light and of the day. Hence no one that knows Moses, and counts himself among his disciples, ought to allow himself to be initiated into such mysteries, or initiate others; for both the learning and the teaching of such things is no trifling sin. For why, ye initiated, if they are beautiful and useful matters, do ye shut yourselves up in profound darkness, and confer the benefit on two or three alone, when you might benefit all were

\* De Abrah. f. 364, s. 19.

† De vita Mosis, I. f. 625, s. 27. "Εθνους, ὅτιοι ἑμιλλεν ἐξ ἀπάντων τῶν ἄλλων ἱερᾶσθαι, τὰς ὑπὲρ τοῦ γένους τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀπάντων ἀνὰ ποιησόμενον εἶχας.

‡ De victimas, f. 238, at the end, s. 3.

§ De victimas offerentib. f. 856, s. 12: Μηδὲς μὴτε τελείσθω τῶν Μαυρίσας φεικτῶν καὶ γνωρίμων μὴτε τελείτω.



you willing to publish in the market-place what you pretend is universally wholesome, so that all might certainly participate in a better and happier life?" He then points to the fact, that in the great and glorious works of nature there is no mystery, all is open. He bears witness to the mere empty mechanical formalities into which the mysteries had degenerated; men, he says, of the worst character, and crowds of abandoned women, were initiated for money.

These religious philosophers among the Alexandrian Jews, of whom we speak, cannot be rightly understood and judged of, except by taking into view both their entire position,—which had been formed upon a combination of the most contradictory elements,—and also their relation to the two opposite parties, between which they were endeavouring to find a true conciliatory mean. On the one hand, they firmly adhered to the religion of their fathers. They were devoted to it with genuine love and reverence, and looked upon its records as the work of the Divine Spirit. Whatever was contained in these records, and particularly in the Pentateuch, passed with them as, in one and the same sense, divine. From these, in their opinion, were to be drawn all the stores of wisdom. On the other hand, their minds were possessed by a philosophical culture at variance with these convictions. They were themselves not unconscious of the conflicting elements that filled their minds, and must have felt constrained to seek some artificial method of combining them into a harmonious whole. Thus they would be involuntarily driven to intercalate in the old records of religion, which for them possessed the highest authority, a sense foreign to their true spirit, supposing all the while that they were thereby really exalting their dignity as the source of all wisdom.

As to the parties between which they moved, and which, in their interpretation of the sacred writings, they had especially in mind, they were two; and these stood in some degree related to the two several tendencies, under which the philosophy of religion according to Platonism, as we have already set it forth, had gone on to shape itself among the Pagans—a sceptical and a superstitious tendency. On the one side were philosophically educated Greeks, who employed what they knew of the Old Testament Scriptures according to their different turns of thinking; either ridiculing them in a scoffing spirit, or with

more earnestness of intention, and stepping forth as the champions of true piety, and charging them with unworthy representations of God.\* And among the Jews themselves, there were some who, under the influence of foreign learning, had rejected the religion of their fathers, and joined its pagan assailants. On the other side were the Pharisaical scribes, no less arrogant than narrow-minded, who, apprehending the things of God in none but a fleshly sense, sought the highest wisdom in little verbal refinements, and by their grossly literal interpretations were led into the most absurd and extravagant opinions†—men who, from their fundamental principle of adhering to the letter, and their low, carnal views, came to form the rudest notions of God and divine things,—of God's shape, of his anger, of his arbitrary will,—and by such notions contributed more than all else to bring Judaism into contempt with the educated Greeks. ‡

Now the object of those Jewish philosophers in religion, like that of the heathen Platonists, was, by making a distinction, in the old records of religion, between spirit and letter, idea and symbol, to strike out a middle course betwixt the above extremes. There was this truth lying at the basis of

\* Thus Philo, in his second book *De plantatione Noae*, s. 17, defends the Old Testament against those who objected as blasphemous to the expression where God is called an inheritance (*κληρος*) of men, as, for instance, with reference to the Levites. *Καὶ νῦν εἰσὶ τινες τῶν ἐπιμορφάζοντων εὐσεβίαν, οἱ τὸ πρόχειρον τοῦ λόγου παρασυκοφαντοῦσι, φάσκοντες οὐδ' ὅσιον αὐτ' ἀσφαλὲς λέγειν ἀνθρώπου θεὸν κληρον.* We might suppose that this attack on the Old Testament proceeded from Jews who, by the preponderant influence of their Greek education, had become alienated from the religion of their fathers, and inclined to a certain species of Deism that avoided anthropopathism. But the manner in which Philo expresses himself seems to favour rather the conjecture that he had pagans in view, for, if he were speaking of apostate Jews, his language would doubtless have been more vehement and bitter, as it usually is in such cases. It is also, I think, to such pagan maligners of the Old Testament that he alludes in a passage to be found only in the Armenian translation of Quæst. in Genes. l. III. s. 3, ed Lips. opp. Philon. T. VII. p. 5.

† Philo (*De somniis*, l. I. f. 580, s. 17) describes them thus: *Τοὺς τῆς ῥητῆς πραγμασίας σοφιστὰς καὶ λίαν τὰς ὁφρῶς ἀνεσπανότας.*

‡ Thus Philo (*De plantat. Noae*, l. II. f. 219, s. 8) directs his discourse against those who took everything in a literal sense in the account of Paradise. He says of them: *Πολλὴ καὶ δυσθεράπευτος ἡ εὐήθεια.* He says, those sensual notions of God led to the destruction of practical religion: *ἐπ' εὐσεβείας καὶ ὁσιότητος καθαρῶσι ἐκθεσμότατα ὄντα εὐρέματα.*



their endeavours, that, in statements which relate to the religious province, matter and form do not bear the same relation to each other as they do in other writings; that here, where the form is something that cannot fully answer to the immeasurable greatness of the matter, the mind, with its thoughts directed towards the divine, must read between the lines in order to discern the divine matter in its earthly vessel. This principle had, moreover, a special justification when applied to the Old Testament, inasmuch as within the latter dwelt a spirit enveloped under a form still more limited and more limiting than elsewhere, which struggled after a future revelation and development, which was to free it from such narrow constraint. But as the consciousness of this spirit which Christianity first revealed was wanting to the Jews, it was nowise unnatural if in interpreting the religion of their fathers they allowed themselves to be guided by a foreign spirit. It was from such a foreign principle, borrowed from the Platonic philosophy, that they started in search of the key which should open to them the spiritual understanding of the Old Testament. Instead of making all its contents bear upon the ends of practical religion, they did but hunt everywhere after universal ideas, hid only under an allegorical cover,—such ideas as their own minds had formed in familiarity with the Platonic philosophy. To excite all susceptible minds to explore these ideas, was, they asserted, the highest aim of those writings.

One extreme opposed itself to the other. Over against that slavery to the letter which characterized a narrow, sensual *Rabbinism*, stood a tendency to evaporate everything into *universals*. The necessary means of arriving at a knowledge of the spirit, which was shrouded in the letter, were despised. The neglect of the useful means of logical, grammatical, and historical interpretation, met its penalty; manifold were the delusions which ensued. A perfect stranger to the history, the manners, and the language of the ancient people, and despising the rules of grammatical and logical interpretation, a Philo found many difficulties in the Greek version of the so-called Seventy Interpreters, in which he was accustomed to read the Old Testament,—a version, indeed, which was not only current at Alexandria, but which, on account of the story of its miraculous origin, was of the highest authority. They were difficulties, however, which by means of the ordi-

nary helps above mentioned he might have easily solved. He frequently overlooked the simplest and most obvious sense, and sought instead for one more profound, which, however, was merely what he himself had put into the words.\* But in addition to this, a mistaken reverence for the sacred writings, an exaggerated view of the operation of the Holy Spirit, which looked upon the inspired writers merely as passive organs, contributed in no slight degree to the difficulties of men who regarded everything as in one and the same sense divine, and wholly overlooked the medium of connection between the divine and the human. At the position in which they had thus placed themselves they naturally found much that was difficult and revolting—much that they must seek to get rid of by an arbitrary spiritualization. Thus an unduly *supernaturalistic* element of the Jewish position led directly to the opposite extreme of an arbitrary rationalism,†—an error which might have been avoided by that method of reconciling the supernatural and the natural which we have already noticed as the views of Plutarch.

Yet these Alexandrian Jews were well aware of the difference between the mythical religion of other nations and the historical religion of their own people. They did, it is true, consider the historical and literal to be but a veil for those universal ideas, the communication of which to the human mind was the highest aim of God's revelations. But still on the whole they also insisted on the objective reality and truth of the history and of the letter, and ascribed to both their importance as a means of religious and moral training for such as could not soar to the necessary heights of contemplation. Far was it from their thoughts to deny the reality of the supernatural in the history of their nation, or to allow it no more than an ideal significance. "He who disbelieves the miraculous," says Philo, in defending the Old Testament history, "simply as the miraculous, neither knows God, nor has he ever sought after Him; for otherwise he

\* We have a remarkable example in the work *Quis rerum divinar. hæres*, f. 492, s. 16, where, in the phrase *ἐξηγάγεν αὐτὸν ἕξω*, he looks for some deeper meaning in the apparently unnecessary repetition of the word *ἕξω*; and again, in the case where the repetition of the noun, according to the Hebrew usage, leads him to conceive of a two-fold subject, and furnishes him an occasion of introducing his idea of the Logos.

† "Einer rationalistisch-idealistischen Willkuhr."



would have understood, by looking at that truly great and awe-inspiring sight, the miracle of the Universe, that these miracles (in God's providential guidance of His people) are but child's play for the divine power.\* But the truly miraculous has become despised through familiarity. The unusual, on the contrary, although in itself insignificant, yet, through our love of novelty, transports us with amazement."†

Still there were isolated passages, the literal understanding of which presented insurmountable difficulties,—difficulties, it might be, for any rational apprehension whatever, or for their minds, from the particular position which they had taken up in *their philosophy of religion*. Such especially were the passages, in interpreting which, the Rabbins who explained everything according to the letter, fell, no doubt, into absurd and fantastic representations; as, for instance, in the account of Paradise. Now here it was beyond the power of the Alexandrian Jews to find from their own point of view such a means of conciliation between the divine and the human as should answer the requirements of reason; by distinguishing between the fundamental fact and the purely symbolical character of a form of tradition. They were therefore forced to push the opposition to the literal mode of interpretation so far as to deny the reality of the literal and historical facts altogether, and to recognise only some ideal truth, some universal thought, that presented itself out of the train of speculations created by a fusion of the Platonic philosophy with the religious ideas of Judaism.‡ But, in maintaining such views, it was far from the intention of a Philo to derogate from the authority of the sacred writings. On the contrary, as he referred everything they contained to the inspiration of the Divine Spirit, so he recognised the wisdom of that Spirit in permitting the writers actuated by Him to represent many things in such a form as, literally understood, could give no tenable sense whatever;

\* De vitâ Mosis, l. II. s. 38: Εἰ δὲ τις τούτοις ἀπιστεῖ, θεὸν οὐτ' οἶδεν οὐτ' ἐξήγησε πάποτε. Ἐγὼ γὰρ ἂν εὐθίως, ὅτι τὰ παράδοξα ἢ ταῦτα καὶ παράλογα θεοῦ παῖδια εἰσὶν, ἀπιδὼν εἰς τὰ τῷ ὄντι μεγάλα καὶ σπουδῆς ἄξια, γένεσιν οὐρανῶν. κ. τ. λ.

† Ταῦτα μὲν πρὸς ἀλήθειαν ὄντα θαυμάσια, καταπεφρόνηται τῷ συνήθει. Τὰ δὲ μὴ ἐν ἔθει καὶ ἂν μικρὰ ἢ καταπληντόμεθα τῷ φιλοκαίῳ.

‡ After pointing out the difficulty of understanding in a literal sense the account of the creation of the woman in Genesis, Philo concludes thus: Τὸ ῥητὸν ἐπὶ τούτου μυθῶδὲς ἴσται. Legis. alleg. l. II. s. 7.

for the end of this was that those who otherwise would be tempted to rest satisfied with the bare letter, and search no farther, might be excited to investigate the ideal sense which lay beneath it.\* To conduct men to this was, in truth, the highest aim of the divine revelations. Hence such stones of stumbling were of necessity scattered here and there, as means of excitement for the spiritually blind.†

Hence men came to take up two positions in respect to religion and the interpretation of its records; that of a faith clinging to the letter and to the history, and that of a contemplation which aspired to the ideas veiled under the historical and the literal facts. The first was, as we see, on the whole, common to both positions. Yet many an opposition arose at the point where the higher spiritual apprehension did not admit of being joined with an adherence to the reality of the literal and historical facts, but required the abandonment of the latter. This, however, was not the only difference between the two positions. The difference lying at the root, and which further developed itself, could not fail to exert a more wide-reaching influence on the whole mode of understanding religion. From this source sprang such opposite views as follow. By those who invariably adhered to the principle of a barely literal interpretation, whatever had been said after an anthropopathic manner, in condescension to the sensuous apprehensions of the multitude, concerning God and God's wrath and his vindictive justice, was taken literally. Such an apprehension of religion after human analogies is however, for a certain stage of culture, indispensable, as being the best adapted to it, and the most likely to deter men from sin by the dread of punishment. But a higher and more spiritual position sees in it only a preparatory and educational element, and proceeds to purify the idea of God from all admixture of the human.‡ Hence the opposition between the apprehension of God as man, and the apprehension of God not

\* Μόνον οὐκ ἐναργῶς προτρέπων ἀφίστασθαι τοῦ ῥητοῦ. Quod deterior potiori insid. s. 6.

† Τὰ σκάνδαλα τῆς γραφῆς, ἀφορμαὶ τοῖς τυφλοῖς τὴν διανοίαν.

‡ This two-fold position is implied in the book Quod Deus immutab. s. 11, where the writer distinguishes that which answers to the truth in itself, and that which had been merely so expressed. Τοῦ νουθεῖσθαι χάριν τοῦς ἑτέρας μὴ δυναμένους σωφρονίζεσθαι, ὅσα παιδείας καὶ νουθεσίας, ἀλλ' οὐχὶ τῇ πεφυκέναι τοιοῦτον εἶναι, λέλεκται.



as man.\* By the exclusion of every human passion, the idea of God was sublimated to a something devoid of all attributes, wholly transcendental; and the Being, (*ὄν*), the good, in and by itself, the Absolute of Platonism, was substituted for the Jehovah of the Old Testament. By soaring upward, beyond all created existence, the mind, disengaging itself from the sensible, attains to the intellectual intuition of this Absolute Being, of whom, however, it can predicate nothing but existence, and sets aside all other determinations as not answering to the exalted nature of the Supreme Essence.† In perfect accordance with this opposition of views, Philo makes a distinction between those who are in the proper sense sons of God, having by means of contemplation raised themselves to the highest Being, or attained to a knowledge of him in his *immediate self-manifestation*,‡ and those who know God only in his mediate revelation through his operations—such as He declares § himself in creation—in the revelation still veiled in the letter of scripture—those, in short, who attach themselves simply to the Logos, and consider this to be the Supreme God—who are the sons of the Logos rather than of the true Being (*ὄν*). The former, moreover, need no other incentives to a moral life than love to the Supreme Being for his own sake—the principle of disinterested love of God. The others, who find themselves at that lower position where God is known only after the analogy of man, must be trained to virtue by the hope

\* This opposition between a positive apprehension of God as man, and a negative apprehension of God, to the exclusion of all human attributes and everything anthropopathic, occurs often in Philo's writings. The comparison of Numb. 23, 19, and Deut. 1, 31, may be said to be classical with him on this subject. "Εν μὲν, ὅτι οὐχ ὡς ἄνθρωπος ὁ Θεός, ἔτιον δὲ, ὅτι ὡς ἄνθρωπος. Quod Deus immutab. s. 11. Compare also the Armenian translation of the tract Quæst. in Genes. l. I. s. 55.

† Οὐδεμιᾷ τῶν γεγονότων ἰδέα παραβάλλουσι τὸ ὄν, ἀλλ' ἐκβιάσαντες αὐτὸ πάσης ποιότητος ψιλὴν ἀνευ χαρακτῆρος τὴν ὕπαρξιν καταλαμβάνειν, τὴν κατὰ τὸ εἶναι φαντασίαν μόνον ἐνεδείξαντο, μὴ μορφώσαντες αὐτό. Quod Deus immutab. s. 11.

‡ To this knowledge of God in his self-manifestation Philo refers in the following passage: Μη ἔμφανισθεῖς μοι δι' οὐρανοῦ ἢ γῆς ἢ ὕδατος ἢ αἵρος ἢ τινος ἄπλως τῶν ἐν γενέσει, μηδὲ κατοπτριζαίμην ἐν ἄλλῳ τινὶ τὴν σὴν ἰδέαν ἢ ἐν σοὶ τῷ Θεῷ, etc. Vid. Leg. allegor. l. III. s. 33. And where he says that, as light can be seen only by means of light, so God only by his own self-manifestation. Συνόλως τὸ φῶς ἅρ' οὐ φωτὶ βλέπεται; τὸν αὐτὸν δὲ τρόπον καὶ ὁ Θεὸς ἑαυτοῦ φέγγος ὧν δι' αὐτοῦ μόνου θεωρεῖται. De præm. et pæn. s. 7.

§ The opposition between ὄν and λόγος, εἶναι and λέγεσθαι.

of reward and the fear of punishment. Philo himself remarks, that correspondent to the two theories which respectively represent God as man, or not as man, there are in religion two principles of fear and of love.\* Those that have attained to the last-mentioned stage are, in his view, the men of *pure intellect* or *pure spirit*, who have freed themselves from the dominion of sense.

Thus, to the sensuous *anthropo-morphism* and *anthropopatheism*, which characterised the grosser mode of apprehension among the Alexandrian Jews, Philo opposed a one-sided *spiritualism*, whereby the idea of God was emptied of all determinate contents. The *real* side of the Old Testament Theism, the objective truth and reality, which is the basis of the Old Testament notions of God's holiness, of his wrath, and of his retributive justice, were by this means totally misapprehended, and all such ideas of God were explained away by a spiritualism far better suited to the Brahminic or the Buddhistic system, than to the characteristic peculiarity of the religion of the Old Testament. We have here, then, already a *mystical Rationalism* brought into combination with the Jewish *Supra-naturalism*—a prototype of tendencies which, at a later period, frequently recur, when the purity of revealed religion has become corrupted. The very individual who, as we have seen, so strongly condemned the Grecian mysteries, introduced into Judaism that aristocratic distinction of the ancient world, between an *esoteric* and an *exoteric* religion; and with it, after the example of Platonism, the justification of falsehood as a necessary means for training the incapable multitude.†

Now the principle of mystic *Rationalism*, if pushed to its extreme consequences, would unquestionably lead to the infer-

\* Παρ' ὃ μοι δοκεῖ τοῖς προσηγμένοις, δυσὶ κεφαλαίοις τῷ τε "ὡς ἄνθρωπος καὶ τῷ οὐχ' ὡς ἄνθρωπος; ὁ Θεός; ἔτι καὶ δύο συνυφῆναι ἀκόλουθα καὶ συγγενῆ, φόβον τε καὶ ἀγάπην· τοῖς θεοπροσώπῳ αὐτὸ δι' αὐτὸ μόνον τὸ ὃν τιμῶσι τὸ ἀγαπᾶν οἰκτιροῦν, φοβεῖσθαι δὲ ἐτίμους. Quod Deus immutab. s. 14.

† Vid. Quod Deus immutab. s. 14, and De Cherubim, s. 5, in both which passages the well-known words of Plato in the Republic, relating to falsehoods that may be justified in certain cases where they can be used for the benefit of simple persons or the sick. Vid. I. II. p. 257, I. III. p. 266, Vol. VI. Ed. Bipont. These remarks of Plato, which were grounded, indeed, in the whole aristocratic spirit of the ancient world, exerted, through various intermediate channels, a great influence on the moral sense of men in the first centuries after Christ, and even modified a part of Christian education.



ence that positive religion is to be regarded simply as a means for training the many—a means which the wise can afford to dispense with, and which for them can have no significance. And, in fact, by many of the Alexandrian Jews this mode of thinking was carried to a height which must finally have resulted in the denial of the supra-naturalist principle itself. They neglected the observance of the ceremonial law, thus drawing upon themselves the charge of heresy from the more religious Jews, and, doubtless, brought the entire Alexandrian theology into bad repute.\* “The observance of outward forms of worship,” they said, “belongs to the many. We, who know that the whole is but a symbolical veil of spiritual truth, have enough in the idea, and need not concern ourselves with external forms.” But with the habit of thinking peculiar to Philo and his class, and which has been explained above, such an extreme, though his own avowed principles naturally led to it, did not well harmonize. Accordingly he says of the more decided and consistent Idealists, “As if they lived in a desert and for themselves, or as if they were souls without bodies and knew nothing of human society, they despise the faith of the many, and will hear nothing but pure truth, such as it is in and by itself; whereas the word of God ought to have taught them to strive after a good name with the people, and to violate none of the reigning customs which divine men, who were superior to us, have established. As we are bound to take care of the body, because it is the tabernacle of the soul, so we ought to be solicitous for the observance of the letter of the law. Where we observe the latter, *the former* also, of which the letter is a symbol, will become clearer, and we shall thereby escape the censures and upbraidings of the multitude.”†

In Egypt, the native land, in after times, of the anchorite and of monasticism, this contemplative bent of the religious mind, which we have hitherto been describing, led to results among the Jews somewhat analogous to that later phenomenon. With a view of devoting themselves to the contemplation of divine things, many withdrew from the world and retired into

\* Philo, De migrat. Abraami, s. 16: Εἰσὶ τινες, οἱ τοὺς ῥητοὺς νόμους σύμβολα νοητῶν πραγμάτων ὑπολαμβάνοντες, τὰ μὲν ἡκεῖβωσαν, τῶν δὲ βαρύντως ὀλιγόρησαν.

† De migrat. Abraami, f. 402.

solitude. Philo was one of these; but he was now to learn, in his own experience, that man carries his inward enemy with him into solitude—that he cannot flee from himself and the world within his own breast. He thus paints his experience: \* “Often I did leave kindred, friends, and country, and retire into the wilderness, that I might raise my thoughts to worthy contemplations; but I gained nothing thereby. My thoughts, either distracted, or wounded by some impure impression, fell into the very opposite current. Sometimes, when God dispels the tumult from my breast, in the midst of thousands, I find myself alone with my soul. Thus He teaches me that it is not change of place that brings evil or good, but that all depends on *that* God who steers the ship of the soul in whatever direction he pleases.” At an early period there arose, then, among the Alexandrian Jews, as Philo testifies, an opposition between a contemplative and a practical direction of the religious life—the opposition between efforts directed solely towards the human, and those directed solely to the divine †—the Therapeutic life, devoted entirely to God, and the moral life, devoted entirely to exhibitions of love for man. Already was a spectacle to be witnessed, which, at later periods, became a common occurrence in large cities. The opposition of the worldly to the contemplative ascetic propensity became the occasion of divisions in the domestic circle. Philo observes that he knew many a father, given to luxurious living, abashed by the abstemious, philosophic life of a son, and who for that reason withdrew from all intercourse with him. ‡

As Philo laboured to discover a middle course between the slavish adherents to the letter and the *Spiritualists* in religion, so again he sought to find a method of reconciling the practical and the contemplative tendency, the anthropological and the theological. The combination of both was,

\* Leg. allegor. l. II. s. 21.

† As Philo describes it. Of the latter tendency he says: “*Ἀκρατον ἐμφορησάμενοι τὸν εὐσεβείας πόθον πολλὰ χαίρειν φράσαντες ταῖς ἄλλαις πραγματείαις ὅλου ἀνέδειξαν τὸν οἰκίον βίον θεραπεῖα Θεοῦ. Οἱ δὲ οὐδὲν ἔσω τῶν πρὸς ἀνθρώπους δικαίων ὑποποτήσαντες εἶναι μόνην τὴν πρὸς ἀνθρώπους ὁμιλίαν ἡσπασαντο, τῶν τε ἀγαθῶν τὴν χρῆσιν ἔξ ἴσου πᾶσι παρέχοντες διὰ κοινωνίας ἡμερον καὶ τὰ δεινὰ κατὰ δύναμιν ἐπικουφίζειν ἀξιοῦντες.*” The φιλόθεοι and the φιλόανθρωποι. De decalogo, s. 2.

‡ “*Ἦδη δὲ καὶ πατέρας οἶδα διὰ τὸ ἄβροδίαιτον, αὐστηρὸν καὶ φιλόσοφον βίον παιδῶν ἐκτραπομένους καὶ δι’ αἰδῶ τὸν ἀγρὸν πρὸ τῆς πόλεως οἰκίαν ἐλομένους.*” De profugis, s. 1.



in his opinion, the more perfect way ; each, by itself and apart from the other, being as it were but half the whole.\* The discipline of the practical life he regarded as the first step of purification and preparation necessary before entering upon the entirely contemplative life. Even he felt himself called upon to protest against an exaggerated estimation of an ascetical life. "When you see one," says he, "who never takes his food or drink at the proper time, and who disdains the bath and the oil, or who neglects the clothing of his body, or torments himself with a hard couch and night-watchings, deceiving himself with this show of abstemiousness, instruct him in the true way to continence, since the course he has chosen is labour thrown away. By hunger and similar kinds of self-torture he is but destroying both body and soul."† He speaks of people who, wholly unripe for such a step, rushed suddenly on a strictly Therapeutic life they were too weak to endure, and so were quickly forced to abandon it.‡ Nay, he feels himself called upon to rebuke a secret wickedness which hid itself beneath the cloak of a rigid asceticism.§ "Truth," he says, "may justly complain of those who, without previous trial of themselves, abandon the occupations of social life, and say they have renounced its honours and its pleasures. They put on a contempt for the world as an outside show, while in reality they are far from despising it. That slovenly, austere look, that abstemious and miserable life, they use as baits, as if they were friends to strict morals and self-control. But closer observers, who penetrate within, and are not to be deceived by outward appearances, cannot thus be imposed upon." Philo would have only those who had been tried in the active duties of social life to devote themselves to the contemplative life. Thus the Levites were not permitted to rest from the active service of the temple till they had passed their fiftieth year. *Human* virtue should go first—the *divine* follow after. ||

\* Ἡμῖτε λείψ τὴν ἀρετὴν, ὁλόκληροι οἱ παρ' ἀμφοτέροις εὐδοκίμουνοιτες. De decalogo, s. 32.

† The tract Quod deterior potiori insid. s. 7.

‡ Such as went ἐπ' αὐλὰς τῆς θεραπείας and θῦπτον ἢ προσελθεῖν ἀπεισῆ-  
δεισαν, τὴν αὐστηράν δίαίταν αὐτῆς καὶ τὴν αὐπνον ἀρεσκείαν καὶ τὸν συνεχῆ καὶ  
ἀκάματον πόνον οὐκ ἐνεγκόντες. De profugis, s. 7.

§ L. c. s. 6.

|| Γνωρίσθητε οὖν πρότερον τῇ κατ' ἀνθρώπους ἀρετῇ, ἵνα καὶ τῇ πρὸς θεὸν συσ-  
ταθῆτε. De profugis, f. 55b, s. 6.

This ascetic, contemplative propensity, which we observed in the bud among the Alexandrian Jews, gave birth to a spiritual society, consisting of men and unmarried women, which sprang up in the neighbourhood of Alexandria; a society, whose name simply—the *Therapeutæ* \*—denotes the striving after a life abstracted from worldly pursuits and devoted to the contemplation of God. Their principal seat was in a quiet and pleasant district on the border of lake Mœris, not far from Alexandria. Here they lived, like the later anchorites, shut up in separate cells,† their only employment being prayer and the contemplation of divine things. The basis of their contemplations was an allegorical interpretation of scripture, and they had old theosophical writings, which, following the principles of the Alexandrian Hermeneutics, served to guide them in their more profound investigations of scripture. Bread and water constituted their only diet, and they practised frequent fasting. They ate nothing until evening, for through contempt of the body they were ashamed, so long as sunlight was visible, by taking bodily nourishment, to acknowledge this dependence on the world of sense. Many of them fasted for three or even six days in succession. Every Sabbath they assembled together, and, as the number seven was particularly sacred with them, they held a still more solemn convocation once in every seven weeks. On this occasion they held a simple love-feast, consisting of bread seasoned with salt and hyssop; mystic discourses were delivered, hymns which had been handed down by ancient tradition were sung, and, amidst choral music, dances of mystic import were kept up late into the night. The passage of their fathers through the Red Sea, on their departure from Egypt, is supposed to have been symbolically represented by these choirs and dances. As it was their habit to give to all historical facts a higher signification, which might bear upon the life of the spirit, it is not improbable that they intended something of the kind by this celebration. Perhaps they considered the departure from Egypt as a symbol of the deliverance of the spirit from the bondage of sense, and of its elevation from sensible things to the divine.‡

Many features of relationship between the sect of the The-

\* Θεραπευταὶ καὶ Σεραπευτιδῆς.

† Σεμνῆα, μοναστήρια.

‡ See Philo, De sacrif. Abel et Caini, s. 17: Διάβασις ἐπὶ θέν του γιννητού καὶ φθαρτοῦ τὸ πάσχα εἰρηται.



rapeutæ and that of the Essenes might seem to render probable the derivation of the one from the other; and this is the prevailing opinion of modern times. It might also be fancied that the names of both these communities have the same signification. For if we follow the derivation which Philo himself favours in a passage of the book concerning the Therapeutic mode of life, the name of this sect according to *one* sense of the radical Greek word signifies a physician; and if the Essenes\* so denominated themselves as being physicians of the soul and of the body, it would be evident that the one is but a translation of the other. But this explanation of the name of the Therapeutæ can hardly be the right one. On the contrary, it suits much better with the peculiar spiritual bent of the Therapeutæ, and with the theological language of the Alexandrians, to suppose that they applied this name to themselves, as the true spiritual worshippers of God—the Contemplatists.† The features of resemblance between these societies, which arise both from the form of their fraternities and from the common circumstance of their prohibiting slavery as contrary to nature, are by no means such as to warrant the inference of an external relationship. Analogous tendencies of the Jewish mind in Palestine, and of the Jewish-Alexandrian mind in Egypt, might have easily produced two such mystic societies, independently of one another, and in forms respectively adapted to the different countries. The Essenes, as we have seen, owed their origin to the existence of a practical mysticism, which is wont to be called forth by all such conflicting opinions as were then rife; and in the same way the society of the Therapeutæ appears the natural emanation of the peculiar religious tendency which had developed itself among the Alexandrian Jews.

Neither the Essenes nor the Therapeutæ ought to be regarded as isolated phenomena, confined exclusively to the

\* After the Chaldee  $\text{ܕܢܝܢ}$ , *physician*.

† Philo often uses the following expressions as synonymous:— $\gammaένος$  θεραπευτικόν,  $\gammaένος$  ικετικόν,  $\gammaένος$  ὁρατικόν, ὁ ἰσραήλ = ἀνὴρ ὁρῶν τὴν Θεὸν. De victimas offerentib. f. 854.  $\text{ἰκίται καὶ θεραπεύται τοῦ ὄντως ὄντος}$ . De monarchia, f. 816.  $\text{ἀνδρὸς ἰκίτου καὶ φιλοθείου Θεὸν μένον θεραπεύειν ἀξιούντος}$ . De decalogo, f. 760.  $\text{οἱ πολλὰ χαίρειν φράσαντες ταῖς ἄλλαις πραγματείαις, ὅλον ἀνέδειξαν τὸν οἰκίον βίον θεραπεύειν Θεοῦ}$ . L. III. De vitâ Mosis, f. 681.  $\text{τὸ θεραπευτικὸν αὐτοῦ (τοῦ Θεοῦ) γένος}$ .

countries in which they had their birth. They were based on far more general tendencies, which belonged to the signs of the times, and the influence of which was at that time more widely spread than merely in Palestine and Egypt. It is distinctly visible in manifold phenomena which the history of Jewish-Christian sects, in the first centuries after Christ, leads us to recognise or to presuppose.\*

Having thus given an outline of the different directions which the religious and theological mind of the Jews pursued, we would now more particularly consider their relation to Christianity. Looking at the great mass of the Jewish people, it would appear that a predominating worldly spirit, which could form none but a sensuous apprehension of the divine, a rage for the marvellous as described by St. Paul, confidence in the inalienable rights of their theocratic descent after the flesh, and in the outward show of legal righteousness, constituted the chief obstacles to the reception of the gospel. Whenever, under the impulse of momentary impressions, men of this cast of mind were led to embrace Christianity, it is nothing surprising if, seeing their earthly expectations were not fulfilled, and having all the while remained Jews in their mode of thinking, they quickly renounced that to which properly they had always been strangers. At least, if they continued to be Christians outwardly, they were never imbued with the spirit of the gospel. Christianity itself was apprehended by them only after a carnal manner, being mixed up with their Jewish delusions; and the faith in one God, as well as in Jesus as the Messiah, was by them converted into an *opus operatum*, wholly without influence on the inner life. They were such as those whom Justin Martyr describes,† deceiving themselves with the notion that, although they were sinners, yet, if they had

\* The language of Philo himself intimates this when he says of the Therapeutæ, Πολλαχοῦ μὲν οὖν τῆς οἰκουμένης ἐστὶ τοῦτο τὸ γένος. "Ἐδεῖ γὰρ ἀγαθοῦ τελείου μετασχεῖν καὶ τὴν Ἑλλάδα καὶ τὴν Βαβυλῶνα. *De vita Contemplativa*, s. 3.

† In the dialogue c. Tryph. f. 370. The words of Justin Martyr directed against such Jews, arguing that there can be no forgiveness of sin without repentance: Ἀλλ' οὐχ ὥς ὑμεῖς ἀπατάτε ἑαυτοὺς καὶ ἄλλοι τινὲς ὅμοιοι ὑμῖν κατὰ τοῦτο, οἳ λέγουσιν, ὅτι καὶ ἁμαρτωλοὶ ὡς, ἡτὸν δὲ γινώσκωσιν, οὐ μὴ λογίσσεται αὐτοῖς κύριος ἁμαρτίαν.



but the knowledge of God,\* the Lord would not charge them with sin; falsifiers of the gospel, like those whom the apostle Paul so often rebukes; the nominal Christians whom James writes against. But as the Pagans, on the other hand, were not under the same temptation to confound a merely preparatory state with the end itself, Christianity must have presented itself to them as the direct contrary of all that they had been before. Hence, as Justin Martyr affirms, more numerous and at the same time more genuine converts were made from the Gentiles than from the Jews.† Yet in every case where the feeling of the higher requisitions of man's nature, an open sensibility to the divine influence, showed itself, there, however it might be enveloped in some still prevailing sensuous element, Christianity could penetrate through the outward veil. In such hearts the expectation of the Messiah, although clouded by a strong tinge of sensuality, could prepare the way for Him, and they would then, through the power of Christian faith, go on, becoming continually more spiritual in their views.

As to the particular systems of Jewish theology which have passed under our review, we may observe, first, of the cold, egoistic Sadduceeism, which checked every aspiration transcending the limits of earthly existence, that it presented no point of contact for the gospel. At least, when, through that simply human feeling which could not wholly be suppressed, it did occasionally find an entrance among the Sadducees, as it did everywhere else, their previous mode of thinking had in nowise prepared the way for such a conversion. And for the very reason that the previous habits of thought formed here no transition-point nor connecting medium between the two, it is impossible to think of any intermingling of Sadduceeism with Christianity. It has been attempted to find traces of such a mixture in the instance of certain teachers who in the apostolic age denied the doctrine of the resurrection. But this has been done without sufficient grounds; for the fact may be traced to wholly different causes.‡

\* Such vain and empty knowledge of God as that which St. John is contending against in his first epistle.

† Justin Martyr, *Apolog.* l. II. f. 88. Πλείονάς τε καὶ ἀληθεστέρους τοὺς ἐξ Ἰνῶν τῶν ἀπὸ Ἰουδαίων καὶ Σαμαρείων Χριστιανούς, ἀληθέστεροι οἱ ἀπὸ τῶν Ἰνῶν καὶ πιστότεροι.

‡ See my *History of the Planting and Training of the Christian Church by the Apostles.*

In the case of the Pharisees, spiritual pride, self-righteousness, the narrow and arrogant conceit in a dead knowledge of scripture, and the absence of that quality which belongs to those whom our Lord calls *the poor in spirit*, were in general the hindrances to faith. We must be careful, however, to distinguish among the Pharisees the *two* classes which have been already pointed out. To those who, from the legal position, were striving with a certain honest earnestness after righteousness, the law might, without doubt, serve in the end as a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ. Through that painful struggle which St. Paul describes from his own experience, in the seventh chapter of his epistle to the Romans, they might obtain peace in believing. Those, on the other hand, who came to Christianity without passing through any such crisis of the inner life, were liable to the temptation of blending their previous Pharisaical mode of thinking with the recognition of Jesus as the Messiah,—who for them, however, was not in any true sense the Saviour,—and of wishing at the same time to hold fast by their righteousness of works.

In Christianity also an element of mysticism was present. In this respect it was calculated particularly to attract that description of religious mind which developed itself in the societies of the Essenes and Therapeutæ. But the mystic element, if carried to an undue extreme, such as should suppress every portion of what is purely human in our nature, might mislead men to intrench themselves within a little contracted circle of feelings and intuitions, and to bar their hearts against every other influence which might strive to penetrate them. To meet Christianity with that poorness in spirit which it requires, must for *such* men, with their imaginary spiritual perfection, have been even the hardest of tasks. And even if, attracted by the mystical element of Christianity, they gave themselves up to its influence, they would still be unable to appropriate its poorness in spirit in any such measure as to adopt Christianity in its integrity and purity. Such persons might easily be tempted to carry over with them their supercilious theosophy and asceticism, and so, in their case, the divine foolishness of the gospel must forfeit its true character. This has been the origin of many sects which corrupted Christianity, and of which the germs are to be found already in the epistle of Paul to the Colossians, and in his pastoral letters.



As to the Alexandrian theology, there were in it, as we have seen, two elements,—a *mystico-rational* element, sprung from the influence of the Platonic philosophy on the Jewish theism ; and a *supra-natural* element, derived from the Jewish national spirit and education. These were blended together, or, to speak more truly, they rather subsisted alongside of each other, than were united by an organic interpenetration. Had not a new and higher power come in to influence this process of development, one of two things must, doubtless, have been the final result. Either the *supra-natural* element would have been overpowered by the *mystic* and *rational* one, or the latter by the former. And if the last had proved the case, then the Alexandrian theology might have paved the way for a certain mystic religion of reason, which would have used historical Judaism simply as its outward veil. Whoever then in such a state was incapable of discerning the value of the supernatural theistic faith of Christianity as a religion issuing from the supernatural facts of that history—to such an one this greatest of the great phenomena in the history of the whole world, which with overwhelming power introduced a positive religious faith once more among men, must have appeared like the shock of a fearful relapse by which humanity was driven many ages backwards from the goal which it was on the very point of reaching. Considered from such a point of view, it could not but be a matter for regret that, instead of a primal type of humanity—that ethereal idea of Alexandrian theology—the Son of man must appear in flesh and blood ; instead of an ideal word, the Word that became flesh must dwell among us. Yet the few thoughts which under manifold forms are constantly recurring in the writings of Philo, the representative of such a tendency, witness too truly to its poverty, and prove that without the infusion of a new creative spirit of life it must of itself have soon led to its own dissolution.

The two elements, however, of the Alexandrian theology, might, if combined together, operate in different ways,—either by affording a point of union for Christianity, or by calling forth an opposition to it.

The preponderance of Grecian culture and of the idealistic element must, in the case of the Alexandrian Jews, as doubtless also of others—of a Josephus, for instance,—over

whom the Greek learning generally had acquired a powerful influence, have operated greatly to repress the expectation of a *personal Messiah*. Together with this expectation vanished the most important point of contact for Christianity; but with it vanished also that stone of stumbling which the preaching of the Cross must have proved to such as gave an earthly shape to their idea of the Messiah. Still we cannot suppose that the Alexandrian theology could have wholly rejected those expectations which were so deeply rooted in the religious spirit of the Jewish people, and so closely interwoven with their national glory and sympathies. Even Philo expresses a conviction that the Mosaic law, the temple, and its worship, are designed for perpetuity.\* Regarding the calamities of the Jews as a righteous punishment, he still cherished the hope that they would one day be converted, and by some extraordinary sign from heaven be gathered from all the nations among which they were dispersed or in captivity, and led back again to Jerusalem. Their piety, inspiring reverence and awe, would either repress the attacks of their enemies, or secure them the victory. Then would a golden age begin from Jerusalem. Everything was then to be restored to that primeval state from which, by their loss of the heavenly image, mankind had become estranged. All nature would then become once more subject to man, and no hostile power should remain to annoy him.† From such statements we see what was the peculiar

\* Vid. De vita Mosis, l. II. s. 3, concerning the Mosaic laws. Τὰ δὲ τούτου μόνου βίβαια, ἀσάλευτα μένει παγίως ἀφ' ἧς ἡμέρας ἐγράφη μέχρι νῦν καὶ πρὸς ἔτι πᾶντα διαμένειν ἐλπὶς αὐτὰ αἰῶνα ὥσπερ ἀθάνατα, ἕως ἂν ἥλιος καὶ σελήνη καὶ ὁ σύμπας οὐρανὸς τε καὶ κόσμος ᾗ. And concerning the revenues of the temple at Jerusalem he says that they will endure as long as this human race and the world. 'Εφ' ὅσον τὸ ἀνθρώπων γένος διαμεινέι, ἕως καὶ αἱ πόλεις τοῦ ἱεροῦ φυλαχθήσονται συνδιαϊωνίζουσαι παντὶ τῷ κόσμῳ. De monarch. l. II. s. 3. So far was he from thinking that the temple would ever be destroyed, or the worship of God could cease to be connected with it.

† See Philo's tract De execrationib. s. 9: Οἱ πρὸ μικροῦ σποράδες ἐν Ἑλλάδι καὶ Βαβυλῶν, κατὰ νήσους καὶ κατὰ ἡπείρους ἀναστάντες, ὁρμὴ μιᾶ πρὸς ἓνα συντίνουσιν ἀλλαχόθεν ἄλλοι τὸν ἀποδειχθέντα χῶρον ξιναγούμενοι πρὸς τινος θειοτέρου ἢ κατὰ φύσιν ἀνθρωπίνην ὄψιν αἰθέλου μὲν ἐτίρρις, μόνους δὲ τοῖς ἀνασωζομένοις ἐμφανούς. Comp. De præm. et pænis, s. 19. Concerning the reconciliation of nature with reformed man, where he had certain passages of the prophets before his mind, consult De præm. et pænis, s. 15.



shape which the common Jewish notions of the Messiah's time and of its attendant phenomena had taken in the spiritualizing schools of Alexandria.

Thus then, in the present case also, was Christianity met, not indeed by the longing for a personal Messiah, but still by a desire for an universal re-establishment of the Theocracy,—for a glorified state of the world. It is possible that the doctrine of an opposition between the idea and its manifestation; the recognition of a defect\* inherent in everything that appears in the world of sense; the ardent aspiration after a godlike life, raised above all sensual alloy, may have kindled a sense of the need of redemption,—the idea of it, and faith in its actual realization. And thus many of the peculiar ideas of the Alexandrian philosophy of religion, as for instance that of a mediating divine Word, through whom the world is connected with God; of his high-priestly office in relation to the phenomenal world; of the first heavenly man; of a godlike life,† might, by conducting its advocates to Christianity, have become converted from a mere ideal element into a real one. To men of this Alexandrian school, Christianity might present itself as a Gnosis, which now for the first time taught a right understanding of the spirit of the Old Testament. The epistle ascribed to Barnabas contains many examples of such points of transition, through which men of the Alexandrian school might have been led over to Christianity.

But it is also possible, too, that in the system of the Alexandrian Jews the *mystico-rational* element, as refusing, in its self-sufficiency, to admit the want of any new revelations, might, no less than the Jewish, which held fast to its own traditional forms of religion as possessing eternal validity,

\* “If God willed to judge the human race without mercy, He could only condemn them, since no man remains free from fault from his birth to his death.” Quod Deus immutab. s. 16. The συγγινείς παντὶ γεννητῷ κῆρες.—Παντὶ γεννητῷ καὶ ἂν σπουδαῖον ᾖ, παρ' ὅσον ἤλθεν εἰς γένεσιν, συμφυεῖς τὸ ἀμαρτάνον. Hence the necessity of sin offerings. De vita Mosis, l. III. s. 17.

† Ζωὴ αἰώνιος ἢ πρὸς τὸ ὄν καταφυγή. De profugis, s. 15. Ζωὴ αἰδῖος. s. 18. Δύναμις ἀληθινῆς ζωῆς. Legis allegor. I. s. 12. But such language might easily proceed from the same common source of the mind, and it is only the most narrow understanding that can suppose that, in every case where it occurs, it must have been derived from Philo, or at least from this Alexandrian theology.

give rise to an opposition to Christianity. And these two tendencies combining together were not unlikely to lead to peculiar corruptions of it; on the one side, by introducing an *idealistic* element, which would resolve everything else into itself, and also give rise to the distinction between esoteric and exoteric doctrine; and on the other, by making of it little more than a spiritualized Judaism. And in fact we shall, in the history of sects, again come across these influences.

Individual ideas of the Alexandrian theology found their way even into those regions where the writings and studies of these men had not been introduced. These attached themselves to a doctrine concerning spirits, formed out of Jewish oriental elements. A longing was felt to lift the veil which covers the world of spirits, to have fellowship with it. Men busied themselves with legends and fictions respecting apparitions of higher intellectual essences under the envelope of a human body.\* It was such a vague foreboding tendency of mind, impatient of the limits of this earthly existence, and aspiring after communications from the unseen world, that preceded and accompanied the highest revelation.

Among the remarkable coincidences which prepared the way for the appearance of Christianity, must be reckoned the dispersion of the Jews among Greeks and Romans. Such of the Jews as were of the sentiments of the Pharisees took great pains to make proselytes. The waning authority of the old national religions, the unsatisfied religious wants of so many, seconded their endeavours. A reverence for the God of the Jews as a mighty Being, for the secret sanctuary of the splendid temple at Jerusalem, had long since found access among the Gentiles. Jewish magicians (Goetæ) ventured on many deceptive tricks, in which they were extremely skilful, in order to produce surprise and amazement. Consequently a disposition to embrace Judaism had become so widely extended, particularly in several of the large capital towns, that, as it is well known, the Roman authors, in the time of the first emperors, often make it a subject of complaint. Thus Seneca, in his tract upon superstition, said of the Jews,

\* Simon Magus, for instance, who appropriated to himself ideas of this sort that were floating about in the East. See also the fragment of the apocryphal writing, Περὶ τῆς ἰωσὴφ, in Orig. in Joann. T. II. s. 25.



"The conquered have given laws to the conquerors."\* But the Jewish proselyte-makers, blind teachers of the blind, having no idea themselves of the true nature of their religion, could not impart it to others. Substituting a dead monotheism in the place of polytheism, for the most part they did but lead those who chose them as guides merely to exchange one superstition for another, and so furnished them with new means for hushing the upbraidings of conscience. Hence our Saviour's rebuke, charging this class of men with making their proselytes two-fold more the children of hell than themselves. But here, however, it is needful accurately to distinguish between the two classes of proselytes. The proselytes in the strict sense of the word, the proselytes of Righteousness, who underwent circumcision and adopted the whole ceremonial law, were different from the proselytes of the gate, who simply pledged themselves to renounce idolatry, to worship God, to abstain from all pagan excesses, and from everything that seemed to be connected with the worship of idols.† The former usually became the slaves of all the superstition and fanaticism of the Jews, and allowed themselves to be led blindfold by their teachers. The more difficult they had found it to submit to a yoke like that of the observance of the Jewish ceremonial law, which, to a Greek or a Roman, must have proved so irksome, the less could they find it in their hearts to believe that all this was of no avail, that they had gained thereby no advantage over others, but that they must renounce this imaginary righteousness. Accordingly such proselytes were often the fiercest persecutors of Christianity, and were the willing tools of the Jews in exciting the pagans against the Christians. It is to this class that the words of Justin Martyr's language to the Jews should be applied.‡ "The proselytes not only do not believe, but they blaspheme the name of Christ twofold more than yourselves, and they are eager to murder and torture us who believe on Him; for they are anxious to resemble you in every respect." The proselytes of the gate, on the other hand, had

\* *Victoribus victi leges dederunt.*

† The so-called seven precepts of Noah.

‡ His words are as follows (*Dialog. c. Tryph. f. 350*): *Οἱ δὲ προσήλυτοι οὐ μόνον οὐ πιστεύουσιν, ἀλλὰ διπλοῦτερον ὑμῶν βλασφημοῦσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ καὶ ἡμᾶς τοὺς εἰς ἐκείνον πιστεύοντας καὶ φονεῖν καὶ αἰκίζειν βούλονται, κατὰ πάντα γὰρ ὑμῖν ἰσομοιοῦσθαι σπεύδουσιν.*

adopted from the Jewish system the principles of theism, without becoming wholly Jews. They had acquainted themselves with the sacred writings of the Jews, and had heard of the great Teacher and King who was to come,—the Messiah. But in what they had read of the Old Testament in that Greek translation, which to a reader not a Jew was often wholly unintelligible, or in what they had heard from Jewish teachers, there was much that still remained dark to them,—they were in the condition of inquirers. The ideas, however, which they had acquired from the Jews, concerning the unity of God, the divine government of the world, of God's judgment, and concerning the Messiah, had better prepared them for the gospel than other Gentiles. Because they believed themselves as yet to *have* too little; because they had as yet no perfect system of religion, but were eager for further instruction in divine things; because they had no sympathy with Jewish prejudices; therefore could the gospel find access among them more readily than among the Jews by birth. From the very first their attention must have been attracted to a doctrine which, without making them Jews, assured to them a full participation in the fulfilment of all those promises which the Jews had made them acquainted with. To these proselytes of the gate, therefore, (the φοβούμενοι τὸν θεόν, εὐσεβεῖς of the New Testament,) the preaching of the gospel was usually directed, as we see in the Acts of the Apostles, after it had been rejected by the blinded Jews; and here the seed of the divine word found not unfrequently a fitting soil in souls anxious for salvation. There were, no doubt, even among the proselytes of the gate, some who, wanting the true earnestness in their search after religious truth, only wished, at all events, to have a convenient way which might lead to heaven without the necessity of self-denial, and who, undecided between Judaism and paganism, but desirous to be sure of being on the safe side, sometimes invoked Jehovah in the synagogue, and sometimes the gods in the temples.\*

\* Commodianus, in his Instructions, has given a picture of this class of men, the *inter utrumque viventes*:—

Inter utrumque putans dubie vivendo cavere,  
Nudatus a lege decrepitus luxu procedis?  
Quid in synagoga decurris ad Pharisæos,  
Ut tibi misericors fiat, quem denegas ultro?  
Exis inde foris, iterum tu fana requiris.



# CHURCH HISTORY.

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## SECTION FIRST.

### RELATION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH TO THE UNCHRISTIAN WORLD.

#### I. PROMULGATION OF CHRISTIANITY.

##### 1.—*Promulgation of Christianity generally; Hindrances to its Spread; Causes and Means of its Progress.*

IF we consider the essential character of Christianity relatively to the religious state of the world which we have just been describing, we shall be at no loss to determine what it was that tended on the one hand to promote, and on the other to retard the progress of the Christian faith. Our Saviour referred to the signs of the times as witnessing of him. Such a contemplation, therefore, will enable us to discern, in the movements of the intellectual world which were then going on, the signs which heralded the new and great epoch in the history of the world. As we have already intimated in the introduction, it will clearly appear that the very tendencies which, singly and by themselves, threatened the stoutest opposition to Christianity, and were calculated most effectually to hinder its advance, when combined together only served to hasten its triumph. It was a consequence inevitably flowing from the very relation of Christianity to the position which the general life of humanity had at the time attained to, that the obstacles opposing themselves to the power which was destined to gain the sovereignty of the world were converted into means for its advancement. We must, therefore, contemplate the two in their connection with each other.

That which preëminently tended to render possible and everywhere to facilitate the introduction of such a religion

was its peculiar character, as one superior to every kind of outward, sensible forms, and, as such, capable of entering into all the existing institutions of human society, since it was not its aim to found a kingdom of this world. The ease with which Christianity adapted itself to all earthly relations, and, while it allowed men still to remain in them, yet, by the new spirit which it infused, and the divine life which it breathed into them, was enabled to raise men above these relations, is distinctly set before us by a Christian who lived in the early part of the second century, and thus describes his contemporaries: \* "The Christians are not separated from other men by earthly abode, by language, or by customs. They dwell not in cities of their own; they use not peculiar language, nor affect a singular mode of life. They live in the cities of the Greeks or of the Barbarians, just as chance has cast the lot of each; and while they conform to the usages of the country, with regard to dress, food, and similar external matters, they yet show a peculiarity of conduct wonderful and striking to all. They obey the existing laws, and triumph over the laws by their own conduct."

But this same lofty spirit, which could adapt to itself all the forms it found at hand, must yet, while it coalesced with all that is pure in humanity, struggle as decidedly with all that is ungodly in man's nature, with whatever issued from it and was connected with it. It announced itself as a power aiming at the *renovation of the world*; but the world sought to maintain its old ungodly ways. Though Christ came not to destroy but to fulfil, yet he came not to bring peace upon the earth, but a sword. Hence a collision with the prevailing modes of thinking and manners was inevitable. Christianity could find entrance everywhere, precisely because it was the religion of God's sovereignty in the heart, and excluded from itself every political element; but it was the fundamental position of that old world which Christianity was destined to overthrow that religion is an institution of the State. The pagan religion, as such, was so closely interwoven with the whole of civil and social life, that whatever attacked the one must also soon be brought into hostile conflict with the other. This conflict might, in many cases at least, have been avoided, had the early Church, like that of later times, been inclined to

\* The author of the letter to Diognetus.



accommodate itself to the world more than the holiness of Christianity allowed, and to become worldly itself, in order to gain the world as a mass. But with the first Christians this was not the case. They were far more inclined to overstep the due measure by a stern antagonism to whatever was alien to the spirit of Christianity, than by lax accommodation to it; and assuredly of the two extremes the former was, for those times, the more wholesome and better adapted to maintain the purity of Christian doctrine and practice.

And the religion which thus opposed itself to deep-rooted customs and modes of thinking, which threatened to shake to the foundation all that had been established by a long succession of ages, came from a people despised by the greater part of the civilized world, and at first found readiest admission among the lower classes of society;—a circumstance which was sufficient of itself to render such a religion contemptible in the eyes of the learned aristocracy of Rome and Greece. What were they who in the shops of mechanics looked to find more than in the schools of philosophers? Celsus, the first writer against Christianity, jeers at the fact\* that “wool-workers, cobblers, leather-dressers, the most illiterate and clownish of men, were zealous preachers of the gospel, and particularly that they addressed themselves, in the first instance, to women and children.” Of a faith which, adapted to all stages of culture, presupposed an equal want in all, men of this stamp had not the remotest conception. The objection they most repeatedly brought against the Christians was, that they preached only a blind faith;† they ought to prove what they advanced, on philosophic grounds. And while Christianity was thus opposed, on the one hand, by the pride of enlightenment, and placed in the same class with all kinds of superstition; so, on the other, it found its fiercest antagonists in superstition itself, and in fanaticism. It had to contend no less with the rudeness than with the civilization of the world.

It is true, no doubt, that the old popular religions had been already shaken by the assaults of unbelief, and had lost all

\* In Origen, c. Cels. l. III. f. 55: ‘Ορῶμεν δὴ καὶ κατὰ τὰς ἰδίαις οἰκίας ἐργουργοὺς καὶ σκυτοτόμους καὶ κναφεῖς τοὺς ἀπαιδευτοτάτους τε καὶ ἀγροικοτάτους ἐναντίον μὲν τῶν πρεσβυτέρων καὶ φρονιμωτέρων δεσποτῶν οὐδὲν φθίγγεισθαι, τολμῶντας, ἐπειδὴν δὲ τῶν παιδῶν ἰδίᾳ λάβρυνται καὶ γυναικῶν τινῶν σὺν αὐτοῖς ἀνεήτων θαυμάσιά τινα διεξόντας.

† Πίστιν ἀλογόν.

their authority. But, as we have seen, many had betaken themselves with renewed fanaticism to the old religion. And hence arose a bloody struggle in its defence. The cruel outbursts of the populace against the Christians is a sufficient indication of the tone of religious feeling which existed at that time among them. A superstition, called forth by the assaults of infidelity, exercised perhaps a greater authority than ever, not only over the ignorant multitude, but also *a part* of the educated class. To the multitudes, who at this period moved in the dim twilight of superstition, Plutarch thought he might apply the language of Heraclitus in describing the world of dreams: "They found themselves, while awake in broad daylight, *each in his own world*,"—a world shut against every ray of reason and truth. These men, who were for seeing their gods with the bodily eye, and were used to carry them about engraved on their rings, or in little images which served them as amulets, in order that they might be able to kiss and worship them at pleasure—men of this stamp would often throw out to Christians the challenge, "*Show us your God!*"\* And to men like these came a spiritual religion, bringing with it no worship of sensible objects, no sacrifices, no temples, no images, and no altars:—bald and naked, as the pagans reproachfully represented it.

There was, as we have already remarked, pretty generally diffused at this period a spirit of inquiry, however, and of longing after some new communication from heaven. In spite of the pertinacity with which men clung to the olden superstition, there existed in various respects a susceptibility for new religious impressions. But this longing—inasmuch as, having no distinct consciousness of its object, it was swayed by the blind impulse of feeling—easily exposed men also to deception, and opened the way for every species of fanaticism.

At the very beginning of the second century Celsus supposed he could account for the rapid progress of Christianity from the credulity of the age, and pointed to the multitude of magicians who, by a pretended exhibition of supernatural powers, sought to deceive men, and who found ready belief with many, creating a great sensation for the moment,

\* As we may see from the Apologies, particularly that of Theophilus ad Autolycum.



which, however, quickly subsided. Yet there was a great difference, as Origen justly replied to Celsus, between their mode of proceeding and that of the preachers of the gospel. These magicians flattered men's sinful inclinations, they fell in with their previous modes of thinking, and required no self-renunciation. On the other hand, he who in the primitive times would become a Christian must tear himself from many of his most cherished inclinations, and be ready to sacrifice everything for his faith. Tertullian says,\* that more were deterred from embracing Christianity by the fear of having to give up their pleasures than by the danger to which their life would be exposed. And the excitement of mind occasioned by such wandering fanatics and magicians disappeared as suddenly as it had been awakened. But that it was quite otherwise with the power which was at work in Christianity, appeared from the permanence of its effects and their ever-widening circle,—a testimony for which Origen could cite history against Celsus.

But the influence of such people (whose existence the opponents of Christianity themselves vouch for) presented a new obstacle to its progress. It must force its way through the circle of delusions which those people had succeeded in drawing around the minds of men, before it could reach their hearts and consciences. The examples of a Simon Magus, an Elymas, an Alexander of Abonoteichos, show in what way this class of people opposed the progress of the gospel. Striking facts, strongly appealing to the outward senses, were necessary in order to bring men entangled in such deceptive arts out of their bewilderment to their sober exercise of reason, and render them capable of higher spiritual impressions.

To this end served those supernatural operations which proceeded from the new creative power of Christianity, and which were destined to accompany it until it had blended itself completely into the natural process of human development. The Apostle Paul appeals to such wonders, attesting to that power of the Divine Spirit which inspired his preaching, as well-known and undeniable facts, and this he does in epistles addressed to the churches which had beheld them;

\* De spectaculis, c. 2. Plures denique invenias, quos magis periculum voluptatis, quam vitæ, avocet ab hac secta.

and the history of the Acts illustrates, in particular instances, the power of those miracles, in first arresting the attention, and in dispelling those delusive influences. The passage in the development of the church, from that first period in which the supernatural, immediate, and creative power predominated, to the second, in which the same divine principle displayed its activity in the form of natural connection, was not a sudden transition, but proceeded by a series of gradual and insensible changes. We should not be warranted, as neither are we in a condition, to draw so sharply the line of demarcation between what is supernatural and what is natural in the effects proceeding from the power of Christianity, when it has once taken possession of human nature.

The Fathers, down at least to the middle of the third century, in language which bespeaks the consciousness of truth, and often before the pagans themselves, appeal to such extraordinary phenomena, as conducing to the spread of the faith; and however we may be disposed to distinguish the facts at bottom from the point of view under which they are contemplated by the narrator, we must still admit the facts themselves, and their effects on the minds of men. It is therefore undeniable that, even subsequently to the Apostolical age, the spread of the gospel was advanced by such means. Let us bring before our mind some of these cases in all their vivid connection with the character and spirit of the times. A Christian meets with some unhappy individual, sunk in heathenish superstition, who, diseased in body and soul, had in vain hoped to get relief in the temple of Esculapius, where so many in those days sought a cure for their diseases in dreams sent from the god of health.\* To no purpose also had he tried the various incantations and amulets of pagan priests and dealers in enchantments. The Christian bids him to look no longer for help from impotent and lifeless idols, or from demoniacal powers, but to betake himself to that Almighty God who alone can help. He hears, he assures him, the prayers of all who invoke His aid in the name of Him by whom He has redeemed the world from sin. The Christian employs no magic formulas, no amulets; but simply calling upon God through Christ, he lays his hand on the sick man's head, in faithful reliance on his Saviour. The sick man is

\* See the Orations of Aristides.



healed; and the cure of his body leads to that of his soul. There were—particularly at this period of the rending asunder and breaking up of the old world on its way to dissolution—multitudes of persons, sick in body and in mind, who, as we have already observed, believed themselves under the dominion and persecution of some demoniacal power. All the powers of ungodliness and destruction would naturally be roused to most violent action, when the healing power of the divine was about to enter into humanity. The revelation of heavenly peace, which should restore all to harmony, must be preceded by a deep-felt inward disunion which in such cases manifested itself. There was no want, either among Pagans or Jews, of pretenders who, by various methods—perfuming with incense, embrocations, medicinal herbs, amulets, adjurations expressed in strange enigmatical formulas—set themselves up to expel those demoniacal powers. In any case, if they produced any effect, it was only to drive out one devil by means of another, and hence the true dominion of the demoniacal power must, by their means, have been confirmed rather than weakened. The words which our Saviour himself spoke, in reference to such transactions, found here their appropriate application. “He that is not with me is against me.” What great credit these pretended exorcists obtained at this date we may judge from the thanksgiving which the Emperor Marcus Aurelius offers to the gods, because he had learned from a wise instructor to trust in none of the tales about the incantations and exorcisms of magicians and wonder-workers.\*

Now it so happens that one who has vainly sought relief from such impostors falls in with a devout Christian. The latter recognises here the power of darkness, and looks no farther for the cause of disease. But he is confident of this one thing, that the Redeemer has overcome the powers of darkness, and that, in whatsoever form they may manifest themselves, they must yield to him. In this confidence he prays, and bears witness of Him who by His sufferings has triumphed over the gates of hell; and his prayer, drawing down the powers of Heaven, works deeply and inwardly upon the distracted nature of the patient. Peace succeeds to the

\* I. 6. Τὸ ἀπιστητικὸν τοῖς ὑπὸ τῶν τερατευομένων καὶ γοητῶν περὶ ἐπαδῶν καὶ περὶ δαιμόνων ἀποπομπῆς καὶ τῶν τοιούτων λεγομένοις.

conflicts that had raged within; and conducted by this experience of the power of Christianity to a belief in it, he is now at last set free, in every sense, from the dominion of evil—thoroughly and for ever healed by the enlightening and sanctifying power of the truth; so that the evil spirit, returning back to the house, finds it no longer swept and garnished for his reception.

Instances of this kind are appealed to by Justin Martyr, when addressing the pagans.\* He says, "That the empire of evil spirits has been destroyed by Jesus, you may, even now, convince yourselves by what is passing before your own eyes; for many of our people, of us Christians, have healed and still continue to heal, in every part of the world, and even in your city (Rome), numbers possessed of evil spirits, such as could not be healed by other exorcists, simply by adjuring them in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate." From an expression of Irenæus we also learn that such cures not unfrequently prepared the way for conversion to Christianity. He says that often they who had been delivered from the power of evil spirits believed, and were added to the Church.† The inward conflicts of a soul that could find no satisfaction of its religious wants in all that the old world had to offer, may have frequently been the occasion of such forms of disease; and by the influence of Christianity the disorder was conquered, not merely in its symptoms, but in its very cause. As a particular gift, quite distinct from the healing of these demoniacal diseases, Irenæus mentions other instances of restoring the sick, by the laying on of the hands of Christians,‡—raising of the dead, who afterwards remained alive in the Church for many years.§ He appeals to the variety of gifts which the true disciples of Christ had received from Him, and which they employed, each after his own measure, for the benefit of their fellow-men. What the Christians thus wrought, simply out of love, and looking for no temporal reward, through prayer to God and invocation

\* In his first Apology, p. 45.

† "Ὅστις πολλάκις καὶ πιστεύειν αὐτοὺς ἐκείνους τοὺς καθαρισθέντας ἀπὸ τῶν πνευμάτων καὶ εἶναι ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ. Adv. hæres, l. II. c. 32, s. 4. Ed. Massuet.

‡ "Ἄλλοι δὲ τοὺς κάμνοντας διὰ τῆς τῶν χειρῶν ἐπιθέσεως ἰῶνται.

§ Καὶ νεκροὶ ἠγέρθησαν καὶ παρέμειναν σὺν ἡμῖν ἰκανοὶς ἔτισην.



of the name of Christ, is contrasted by this father with the juggling tricks resorted to by such as gained a livelihood thereby. Origen saw in the miraculous powers which, though sensibly diminished, still existed in his time, an instance of what on the first appearance of Christianity had particularly contributed to advance its progress.\* In his defence of Christianity against Celsus he cites cases from his own experience, where he had been an *eye-witness of the fact*, in which, simply by invocation of the name of God and of Jesus, after the preaching of his history, many were healed of grievous diseases and states of insanity, which neither human skill nor demoniacal influence had been able to relieve.† It is a remarkable fact, attested by Tertullian and Origen, that many were led to embrace Christianity by extraordinary psychological phenomena. Tertullian relates that most came to a knowledge of the true God by means of visions.‡ Now although *this* father of the Church was on the whole perhaps inclined to exaggeration, and in particular to lay an undue stress on such appearances; yet his statements on this head are confirmed by the testimony of Origen. The latter asserts that "Many have come to Christianity as it were against their will, some Spirit turning their minds from hatred of the word to willingness to die for it, and sending visions to them, either awake or dreaming."§ He calls God to witness that nothing was further from his wish than to attempt to add to the glory of Christianity by false statements;—and yet he could relate many things seemingly incredible, which he had *himself witnessed*. Such testimonies are most instructive, since they acquaint us with the manner in which conversions at this period were often brought about. We shall indeed see cause in many instances to refer these phenomena, not so much to a divine miraculous agency, operating from without, as to the

\* Τὰς τεραστίους δυνάμεις, ἃς κατασκευαστίον γεγονέναι ἐκ τοῦ ἵχνη αὐτῶν ἔστι σώζεσθαι παρὰ τοῖς κατὰ τὸ βούλημα τοῦ λόγου βιούσιν. c. Cels. l. I. s. 2.

† Τούτοις γὰρ καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐωράκαμεν πολλοὺς ἀπαλλαγέντας χαλεπῶν συμπτωμάτων ἐκστάσεων καὶ μανιῶν καὶ ἄλλων μυρίων, ἅπερ οὐτ' ἀνδρωποὶ οὐτε δαίμονες ἰδεράπευσαν.—c. Cels. l. III. c. 24.

‡ Major pæne vis hominum e visionibus Deum discunt. De anima, c. 47.

§ Πολλοὶ ὥσπερ ἄνθρωποι προσελθούσιν χριστιανισμῷ, πνεύματός τινος τρέφαντος αὐτῶν τὸ ἡγεμονικὸν αἰνέειν αὐτὸ τοῦ μισεῖν τὸν λόγον ἐπὶ τὸ ὑπεραποθανεῖν αὐτοῦ, καὶ φαντασιώσαντος αὐτοὺς ὑπαρῆ ἢ ὄναρ. c. Cels. l. II. c. 46.

internal power with which Christianity agitated the spiritual life of the period. The way in which the divine principle of life in Christianity—the new power among mankind—came into collision with the principle of paganism, could not fail to produce extraordinary phenomena in the world of consciousness, through which, as its crisis, the religious life of individuals must pass ere it could arrive at its end.

Yet as each particular miracle wrought by Christ was but a single flash from the fullness of the Godhead which dwelt in him, having for its end simply to bring home to the minds of men the immediate self-manifestation of this fullness; so too all subsequent miracles are but single flashes, issuing forth from the immediate divine power of the gospel, and contributing to make a revelation of the latter to the religious consciousness. Without this itself, and its relation to man's nature, and in the absence of the peculiar conditions which belonged to man's nature in this particular period, all else would have been to no purpose. That which the divine power in the gospel wrought immediately by itself on man's nature,—still allied to God though estranged from its original source,—from first to last was the main thing, the end for which all else was but subsidiary and preparatory. It is this that the Apostle Paul ranks above all other kinds of evidence, above all particular miracles, describing it as the "demonstration of the Spirit and of power."\* And as this divine power exerted its influence on the inner life of man, so in his outward conduct and actions it manifested itself with an attractive energy; and this, more than all else, contributed to the conversion of the heathen.

To facts of this kind Justin Martyr appeals as matter of experience.† After quoting the words of our Lord, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven," he adds—"Our Lord would not have us recompense evil for evil, but requires that, by the power of patience and meekness, we should win all men from the disgrace of their evil passions.

\* A passage which, indeed, came to be misunderstood at a very early period, because too much importance was attached to the outward. Thus it was Origen's opinion that the ἀπόδειξις πνεύματος καὶ δυνάμεως is so predicated of the ἀπόδειξις—διὰ τὰς προφητείας καὶ τὰς τεραστίους δυνάμεις. c. Cels. l. I. s. 1.

† Apolog. II. f. 63.



And we can point to many among us who, from violent and tyrannical men, have been thus changed by a victorious power, when they saw how their neighbours could bear all things, or witnessed the singular patience of their defrauded fellow-travellers, or came to be acquainted with the conduct or behaviour of Christians in any other relation of life." The eminent virtues of the Christians must have gained a brighter lustre from contrast with the prevailing vices; their strictness of morals was sometimes even carried to excess, amidst the universal depravity of the age; their hearty fraternal love was a strong contrast to that predominant selfishness which separated man from man, and rendered all distrustful of each other, rendering the nature of Christian fellowship incomprehensible, and a never-failing source of wonder. "See," was the common remark, "how these Christians love one another." "This seems so extraordinary to them," says Tertullian,\* "because *they* are used to hate one another. See," they exclaim, "how among the Christians one is ready to die for the rest; this seems so wonderful to *them*, because *they* themselves are far more ready to murder one another." Although a brotherly union of this sort excited suspicion in those who were used to watch everything with the jealous eye of political interest† (and several persecutions of the Christians were thereby occasioned), yet on minds not narrowed by such habits, or not abandoned to fanaticism, very different was the impression produced. With such the question could hardly fail to arise, "What is it which can thus bind together the hearts of men, in other respects wholly strangers to one another?" In an age of enervated refinement‡ and of servile cowardice, the Christians manifested an enthusiasm which gave fresh energy to life, and an heroic faith which despised tortures and death rather than do what was contrary to conscience. This heroism of the Christians did indeed strike

\* Sed ejusmodi vel maxime dilectionis operatio notam nobis inurit penes quosdam. Vide inquit, ut invicem se diligant. Ipsi enim invicem oderunt. Et pro alterutro mori sint parati, ipsi enim ad occidendum alterutrum paratiores. Apolog. c. 39.

† This view of the matter is expressed in the language of the Pagan Cæcilius, in the Octavius of Minucius Felix (s. 9): Occultis se notis et insignibus noscunt et amant mutuo pæne ante quam noverint.

‡ Ipsa urbanitate decepti, says Tertullian of his contemporaries.

many as a phenomenon foreign to the age; they made it a matter of reproach to them that they possessed a character well enough befitting the ruder days of antiquity, but little suited to their own more refined and gentle times.\* Although, however, the ordinary Roman statesmen and the followers of a worldly prudence which moves only by precedent—though the cold Stoic, who for all things demanded a logical demonstration, could see in the calm fortitude with which the Christians met death in testimony of their faith nothing but a blind enthusiasm, yet the confidence and the cheerfulness of the suffering martyrs could not fail to make an impression on less hardened or less prejudiced minds, leading them to inquire more deeply into the nature of that creed which made men thus ready to give up all and to suffer any sacrifice. Outward violence could effect nothing against the inward power of divine truth; it could only cause the might of this truth to be more gloriously manifest. Tertullian, therefore, concludes his ‘Apology’ with this address to the persecutors of the Christians:—“All your refinements of cruelty can accomplish nothing; on the contrary, they do but serve to win men over to this sect. Our number increases the more you persecute us. The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Christians. Your philosophers, who exhort to the endurance of pain and death, make fewer disciples by their words than the Christians by their deeds. That obstinacy which you reproach us with is a teacher; for who that beholds it is not urged to inquire into its cause? And who, when he has inquired, does not come over to us; and when he has come over, is not himself willing to suffer for it?”†

Add to this, that Christianity appeared when the time was now full that the glory of the “Eternal City” must depart from her: for so long as its powerful associations still held a sway over the minds of men, mastering and moulding all interests and feelings, small place was left for that sense of want which led many to Christianity. But when all that had

\* Well enough for the *ingenia duriora robustioris antiquitatis*; but not for the *tranquillitatem pacis* and the *ingenia mitiora*. Tertull. adv. Nat. I. c. 18.

† *Semen est sanguis Christianorum—illa ipsa obstinatio, quam exprobratis, magistra est. Quis enim non contemplatione ejus concutitur ad requirendum, quid intus in re sit?*



hitherto been an object of enthusiastic love and had given a certain impulse to the soul was now growing old and fading away, Christianity appeared, calling men from a sinking old world to a new creation, which was destined for eternity. As Augustin beautifully expresses it, "Christ appeared to the men of a decrepit and dying world, that, while all around them was decaying, they might through Him receive a new youthful life." And the higher life which Christianity came to impart required no brilliant outward splendour for the manifestation of its glory, as did all that had been admired as great in the old republican virtue. Into the midst of circumstances and situations the most cramping and depressing, this divine life could find its way, and, causing its glory to shine forth in weak and despised vessels, elevated man above all that tends to bow him to the earth, without tempting him to overstep the bounds which they believed an overruling providence had assigned to their station in the world. Outwardly the slave still remained a slave, fulfilling all the duties of his place with far greater fidelity and conscientiousness than before; and yet within he felt himself free, and showed an elevation of soul, a confidence, a power of faith and of resignation, which must have filled his master with amazement. Men in the lowest class of society, who had hitherto known nothing of religion but its ceremonies and its fables, attained to clear and firm religious convictions. The remarkable words already quoted from Celsus, as well as many individual examples of the first times of Christianity, show us the truth of the gospel spreading to whole families, often from *women*\* who, as wives and mothers, reflected a spiritual light on the surrounding pagan corruption; and often from young men, boys, and maidens; and even from slaves, who put their masters to shame. "Every Christian mechanic," says Tertullian, "has found God, and shows him to you; and can teach you all in fact that you require to know of God; even though Plato (in the *Timæus*) says that it is hard to find out the creator of the universe, and impossible, after one has found him, to make him known to all." In like manner, Athenagoras:—"With

\* Compare the words of the pagan Cæcilius in the *Octavius* of Minucius Felix, where, speaking of the Christians, he says (c. 8), *Qui de ultima fæce collectis imperitioribus et mulieribus credulis sexus sui facilitate labentibus plebem profanæ conjurationis instituunt.*

us you may find ignorant people, mechanics, and old women, who, though they could not prove to you with words the saving power of their religion, yet by their deeds show forth the sanctifying influence of the disposition it communicates; for they do not learn words by rote, but they exhibit good works; when struck they strike not again; if robbed, they go not to law; they give to them that ask of them, and love their neighbours as themselves."

The gross material notions which undoubtedly prevailed among a large portion of the early Christians, as, for example, among the Chiliasts, have frequently been urged as a reproach to Christianity. But in truth it is precisely this that most displays its distinguishing character. As it is not a system of notions, but a promulgation of facts, it could be brought within the range even of a material habit of thinking, and, lowering itself to its comprehension, could mix with it, and by the power of those facts it was able to communicate, even to such a material form, a divine life, which should gradually ennoble the whole nature of the man with all his faculties and propensities, and so spiritualize his very habits of thinking. And in connexion with this phenomenon still another remains to be noticed. The pole of human nature most opposite to this was at the same time seized by Christianity with overwhelming power, as is evident when we compare the Gnostics with the Chiliasts. So deeply impressed from the first on the developing process of this religion is the stamp of its divine and human character, that by virtue of it it could and must attract the opposite poles of man's nature, and simultaneously affect all the intermediate stages. And, as we shall see, it was precisely this, its distinguishing characteristic, that most advanced the wider diffusion of Christianity, and its final triumph over the old world.

## *2. Propagation of Christianity in particular Districts.*

The great highways by which the knowledge of the gospel was to be spread abroad had already been opened by the intercourse of nations. The easy means of intercommunication within the vast Roman empire; the close relation which the Jews dispersed throughout all lands kept up with those at Jerusalem; the way in which all the Roman dominions had their



common centre in the great capital of the world; the connection of the provinces with their metropolitan towns, and of the larger portions of the empire with the more considerable cities, were all circumstances favourable to this end. Such cities as Alexandria, Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, were the centres of a wide commercial, political, and literary correspondence; and on this account became also the principal seats for the propagation of the gospel, and the ones in which the first preachers tarried longest. That commercial intercourse which from the earliest times had served, not merely for the barter of worldly goods, but also for the exchange of the nobler treasures of mind, was now to be used as a channel for the diffusion of the highest spiritual blessings.

As a general rule, Christianity first gained ground in the cities; for, as it was needful above all to obtain fixed seats for the propagation of the gospel, its first preachers, passing rapidly over the country, published the glad tidings first of all in the cities, from which it might afterwards be easily diffused through the country by native teachers. On the other hand, in the country they were likely to encounter greater obstacles owing to the entire rudeness, the blind superstition, and the heathen fanaticism of the people, as well as from their own ignorance in some cases of the old provincial dialects; while in the towns, for the most part, they could make themselves sufficiently well understood by using the Greek or the Latin language. Yet we know from Pliny's report to the Emperor Trajan, no less than from the account given by the Roman Bishop Clemens,\* and the statements of Justin Martyr,† that this was not universally the case. In many districts country churches were formed very early; and Origen says expressly‡ that many considered it their duty to visit not only the cities, but also the country towns and villas; and that this was the case seems evident, moreover, from the great number of country bishops in particular districts.

In the New Testament we find accounts of the dissemination of Christianity in Syria; in Cilicia; probably also in the

\* Ep. I. Corinth. c. 42.

† Apologet. II. f. 98.

‡ c. Cels. l. III. c. 9: *Τινες ἔργον ποιήνται ἐκ περιεργασθαι οὐ μόνον πόλεις, ἀλλὰ καὶ κάμας καὶ ἱπαύλεις.*

Parthian empire, which at that time was very extensive;\* in Arabia; in Lesser Asia, and the countries adjacent; in Greece and the neighbouring countries as far as Illyricum; and also in Italy. But authentic accounts on this subject are greatly deficient; for later traditions, growing out of the desire to trace each national church to an immediately apostolic origin, deserve no consideration. We confine ourselves to what can be safely credited.

The old story of the correspondence between a prince of the dynasty of the Abgari or Agbari, the Agbar Uchomo (who ruled over the small state of Edessa Osrhoëne in Mesopotamia), and our Saviour, to whom he is said to have applied for the cure of a grievous disorder, is entitled to no credit; nor is that of his conversion by Thaddeus, one of the Seventy. Eusebius found the documents from which he drew up his narrative in the public archives of Edessa; and suffered himself to be deceived by them. The letter ascribed to Christ is utterly unworthy of Him, and bears throughout the marks of having been compiled from several passages of the gospels. It is moreover inconceivable that a letter written by Christ himself could have remained unknown to the rest of the world till the time of Eusebius. The letter too of Abgarus is not couched in the style of an oriental prince. Whether the story be founded in any degree on truth we have no means of determining. All that is certain is, that Christianity was early diffused in this country; yet it is not till between the years 160–170 that one of its princes, Abgar Bar Manu, is mentioned as a Christian. With him the Christian sage Bardesanes is said to have stood very high; and this writer informs us that Abgar forbade, under a severe penalty, the self-mutilations usually connected with the worship of Cybele, commanding those who should be guilty of it to lose their hands. From this fact alone it does by no means follow that he was a Christian; but the inference is strengthened by the fact that on the coins of this prince the usual symbols of the old

\* For the circumstance that Peter (1 Ep. V. 13) sends a greeting from his wife in Babylon—whether it was the then capital of Seleucia, or, more probably, the old fallen Babylon—leads to the conjecture that he was residing in those countries. [Von seiner Frau in Neander; the original is ἡ συνεκλεκτή, which Luther translates “die samt euch auserwählet,” understanding ἐκκλησία, and agreeing with our version, “The church . . . . elected together with you.”]



national worship are, for the first time, wanting; and the sign of the cross appears in their place.\* As early as in the year 202 the Christians of Edessa had a church, which was built, as it seems, after the model of the temple at Jerusalem.†

If St. Peter preached the gospel in Parthia,‡ some seeds of Christianity may at an early period have easily reached *Persia*, which then belonged to that empire; but the frequent wars of Parthia and Rome would prevent all communication between Parthian and Roman Christians. Bardesanes of Edessa, mentioned above, who wrote in the time of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, notices the spread of Christianity in Parthia, Media, Persia, Bactria.§ After the restoration of independence to the ancient empire of Persia, under the Sassanides, the Persian Christians become better known to us through the attempts of the Persian Mani in the latter half of the third century to form a new religious doctrine out of the union of the ancient oriental systems with Christianity.

In Arabia, there were Jews residing in great numbers, who may have afforded an opening for the preaching of the gospel in that country; but the same circumstance however would also present a powerful obstacle to it. But the latter, no doubt, much more than the former. It is clear, from his own words, that the Apostle St. Paul, soon after his conversion, retired from Damascus to Arabia. But how he employed himself during his residence in that country, and with what results, remains uncertain.|| If the country called India, in a tradition of which we shall presently speak, is to be taken for a part of Arabia, then it would appear that the Apostle St. Bartholomew preached the gospel to the Jews there, and took with him, for this purpose, a gospel written in the Hebrew (Aramaic) language—probably that compilation of our Lord's discourses by St. Matthew which is the basis of our present

\* Bayer, *Historia Edessena e nummis illustrata*, l. III. p. 173. But Bayer places him, no doubt incorrectly, as late as A.C. 200.

† In the chronicle of Edessa (compiled from ancient documents about the middle of the sixth century) it is recorded, in expressions which imply that the document was not written by a Christian hand, that by the violence of a flood the templum ecclesiæ Christianorum had been destroyed. V. Assemani *Bibliotheca orientalis*, T. I. p. 391.

‡ According to the tradition preserved in Origen; Euseb. III. 1, also the apostle Thomas.

§ Euseb. *Præparat. Evang.* l. VI. c. 10.

|| See my *History of the Planting, &c.*, Vol. I. p. 126.

gospel according to St. Matthew.\* On this supposition too the learned Alexandrian catechist, Pantæus, was teacher of a portion of this people in the latter half of the second century. In the early part of the third century, Origen, the great father of the Alexandrian Church, laboured in the same field. Yet doubtless we must understand only that part of Arabia which was in subjection to the Roman empire. Eusebius,† informs us that at that time the Arabian commander sent letters to Demetrius, bishop of Alexandria, and to the then prefect of Egypt, earnestly requesting that Origen might be allowed to come to him, since he was desirous of conferring with him in person.‡ Most assuredly, this Arabian commander was not the hereditary chief of some wandering tribe of Arabs. Such a person could hardly have ever heard of Origen. But a Roman governor might well have been moved by the fame of the great teacher—celebrated at this time even among the heathen for his holy life, his wisdom, and scientific attainments—to seek a personal conversation with him on religious subjects. Such an one might have belonged to the number of *truth-seeking* men among the pagans of those times. If so, Origen most assuredly availed himself of this interview for the purpose of winning the governor to the side of the gospel. At a somewhat later period we find Christian churches in Arabia, and standing in immediate connexion with Origen. To the further propagation of the gospel in these parts in still later times, the nomadic habits of the people and the hostile influence of the Jews presented great obstacles.

The ancient Syro-Persian church, whose remains survive to the present day on the coast of Malabar in the East Indies, boasts as its founder the Apostle St. Thomas, and professes to be able to point out the place of his burial. Were this a tradition handed down within the community itself, independent of other accounts, we should not be inclined to yield credence to it; but neither, on the other hand, should we be warranted in rejecting it absolutely.§ It is not impos-

\* See my History of the Planting, &c., Vol. I. p. 131, Remark.

† L. VI. c. 19.

‡ "Ἐπιστάς τις τῶν στρατιωτικῶν (which suggests some person of the Roman office of dux Arabiæ), ἀνεδίδου γράμματα Δημητρίῳ τε τῷ τῆς παροικίας ἐπισκόπῳ καὶ τῷ τότε τῆς Αἰγύπτου ἐπαρχῷ παρὰ τοῦ τῆς Ἀραβίας ἡγουμένου (as a dux Arabiæ afterwards occurs in the Notitia imperii).

§ It becomes the conscientious inquirer, who leans neither on the side



sible that this church, the earliest notice of which is found in the reports of Cosmas Indicopleustes, about the middle of the sixth century, owed its existence to a mercantile colony of Syro-Persian Christians, and, having brought with it the earlier traditions of the Greek mother church, might have simply transmitted these, but after a time the channel from whence they had been originally derived was perhaps forgotten. We must, therefore, examine more closely these traditions themselves. But the Greek traditions, although old, are very vague and uncertain. The looseness with which the geographical name of India was employed contributes to this uncertainty. Ethiopia, and Arabia Felix, the adjacent *Insula Dioscoridis*, (the island *Diu Zocotara*, at the mouth of the Arabian Gulf,) were formerly designated by this name.\* These countries, however, maintained by commerce a lively intercourse with India proper, and might thus have furnished a channel for the propagation of Christianity in the latter. Gregory of Nanzianzen asserts† that Thomas preached the gospel to the Indians; but by India here Jerome understands Ethiopia.‡ If the tradition in Origen, which makes Thomas the Apostle to the Parthians, be credible, it still would not be absolutely inconsistent with the former account, since at that time the Parthian empire touched on the boundaries of India. At all events, such statements are not very clear and precise. Eusebius,§ as we have observed already, relates that Pantænus undertook a missionary tour to the people dwelling eastward, which he extended as far as India. There he found already some seeds of Christianity, which had been conveyed thither by the Apostle Bartholomew, as well as a Hebrew

of arbitrary doubt nor on that of arbitrary assertion, to express himself, in matters of this sort, as my friend and honoured colleague Ritter has done in his instructive remarks on this point in the *Erkunde von Asien* (Bd. IV., 1ste Abtheilung, S. 602): "What European science cannot prove is not therefore to be rejected as untrue, but only to be regarded as problematical for the present; by no means, however, is any structure to be erected upon it as a safe foundation."

\* According to Ritter (l. c. S. 603), to be explained from the fact that not only Indian trade colonies—the Banianes, Banig-yana, according to the Sanscrit, trade-people (see Ritter, l. c. S. 443)—had settled there, and that the whole region furnished emporia for Indian wares, but that these were the few direct intermediate stations for the uninterrupted commerce with foreign India.

† Orat. 25.

‡ Ep. 148.

§ L. I. c. 10.

gospel which the same Apostle had taken with him. The mention of the Hebrew gospel is not at all inconsistent with the supposition that India proper is here meant, if we may assume that the Jews who now dwell on the coast of Malabar had already arrived there. The language of Eusebius seems to intimate that he himself had in view a remoter country than Arabia, and rather favours the conjecture that he meant to speak of India proper. Yet it may be a question whether he was not himself deceived by the name. To settle the controverted question what countries we are really to understand by these traditions, we must compare also the later accounts of the fourth century. In the time of the Emperor Constantine,\* a missionary, Theophilus, with the surname Indicus, is spoken of as coming from the island Diu ( $\Delta\iota\upsilon\beta\omicron\upsilon\tilde{\nu}\epsilon\varsigma$ ), by which is to be understood the island Zocotara above-mentioned. In his native land, and in the other districts of India† which he visited from thence, he found Christianity already planted, and had only to correct certain things.

We next cross over to Africa. *The country* in this quarter of the world, where Christianity must have been first disseminated, was *Egypt*. For here, in the Grecian and Jewish enlightenment at Alexandria, were presented, as we have already shown, points of contact and union. Even among the first zealous preachers of the gospel we find men of Alexandrian education, as, for instance, Apollos of Alexandria, and probably also Barnabas of Cyprus. The epistle to the Hebrews, the epistle ascribed to Barnabas, the gospel of the Egyptians ( $\epsilon\upsilon\alpha\gamma\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\iota\omicron\nu\ \kappa\alpha\tau'\ \text{Αἰγυπτίους}$ ), in which the Alexandrian-theosophic taste displays itself—the Gnosticism in the first half of the second century—are proofs of the influence exerted by Christianity, at a very early period, on the philosophy of the Alexandrian Jews. An ancient tradition names the evangelist Mark as the founder of the Alexandrian Church. From Alexandria Christianity must have easily found its way to Cyrene, on account of the constant intercourse and the reciprocity of ideas between the two places. But though the gospel may have early found its way into the parts of Lower Egypt inhabited by Grecian and Jewish colonies, yet it would not be so easy for it to penetrate into Middle, and particularly

\* Vid. Philostorg. hist. l. III. c. 4 and 5.

† 'Εξελθὼν τις τὴν ἀλλαν ἀφικετο Ἰνδικὴν.



into Upper Egypt. For in those parts, the foreign character of the Coptic language, the dominion of the priests, and the old Egyptian superstition were considerable obstacles in its way. A persecution, however, of the Christians in Thebais, under the Emperor Septimius Severus,\* proves that Christianity had as early as the closing years of the second century made some progress in Upper Egypt. It is probable that in the first half of the third century this province had already a version of the New Testament in its own ancient dialect.

There are no distinct and credible accounts of the diffusion of Christianity in *Ethiopia* (Abyssinia) in these centuries. History gives no account of the consequences which resulted from the conversion of the chamberlain of Candace, Queen of Meroe, which is narrated in the Acts.† The first certain indications of the conversion of a part of Abyssinia is that through the instrumentality of Frumentius, in the fourth century. Yet the question might be raised,‡ whether some seeds of Christianity may not have been brought still earlier into other districts of this country by Jewish Christians; and whether many Jewish customs, and the importance which is ascribed by *one* party to the baptism of Christ,§ may not be referred to such an origin.

In consequence of their connection with Rome, the gospel early found its way to *Carthage*, and to the whole of *proconsular Africa*. The church at Carthage becomes first known to us in the last years of the second century, through the presbyter Tertullian; but it was then evidently in a very flourishing state. The Christians in those districts were already very numerous, and complaints were made that Christianity continued to spread both in town and country, among all ranks, and even in the very highest.|| To pass over those passages where Tertullian is evidently speaking rhetorically, we find him mentioning in his address to Scapula, the governor,¶ a persecution of Christians in Mauritania. By the middle of

\* Euseb. l. VI. c. 1.

† Chap. 8.

‡ The late Hr. Rettig, if I mistake not, has somewhere directed attention to the same inquiry.

§ See *Journal of a Three Years' Residence in Abyssinia*, by S. Gobat, p. 254. London, 1834.

|| Apologet. c. 1. Obsessam vociferantur civitatem; in agris, in castellis, in insulis Christianos; omnem sexum, ætatem, conditionem, et jam dignitatem transgredi ad hoc nomen.

¶ Cap. 4.

the third century, indeed, Christianity had made such progress in Mauritania and Numidia, that under Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, a synod was held consisting of eighty-seven bishops.

Passing over to Europe, we have in Rome the chief but not the only seat of the propagation of Christianity. Flourishing communities, at Lugdunum (Lyons) and Vienne, become known during a bloody persecution in 177. The great number of Christians from Asia Minor whom we find here, and the close connection of these communities with those of that country, lead to the conjecture that the commercial intercourse between these districts of France and Asia Minor, an original seat of the Christian Church, had led to the planting of a Christian colony in Gaul. In the other parts of Gaul the pagan superstition long withstood the further spread of Christianity. Even as late as the middle of the third century, few Christian communities were to be found there. According to the French historian, Gregory of Tours, seven missionaries came, at that time, to Gaul from Rome, and founded churches in seven cities, over which they became bishops. One of these was that Dionysius, first bishop of the community at Paris, whom later legends confounded with Dionysius the Areopagite, who was converted at Athens by the Apostle St. Paul. Gregory of Tours, who wrote near the end of the sixth century, in an age when so many fables were propagated respecting the origin of churches, is, we allow, no very trustworthy authority; still there may be some truth at the bottom of this statement. One of the seven, Saturnin, founder of the church at Toulouse, is known to us by a much older document—the relation of his martyrdom.

Irenæus, who became bishop of the church at Lyons some time after the persecution of 177, speaks of the spread of the gospel in *Germany*.\* But we must here distinguish the different parts of Germany—the districts in subjection to the Roman empire, and the still larger portion of free, independent Germany. A seed of Christianity might easily find its way into the first of these countries through their connection with the province of Gaul. But the case was very different with those hardy tribes who so fiercely maintained their ancient state of rude freedom, and rejected all foreign institutions. Irenæus, it is true,

\* Adv. Hær. l. i. c. 10.



says in another passage,\* “Many tribes of the barbarians, without paper and ink, have the words of salvation written in their hearts through the Holy Ghost.”† He recognised in the influence of Christianity that peculiar and essential quality which enabled it to reach men in every stage of civilization, and by its divine energy penetrate to their hearts. Still it is also certain that Christianity would nowhere long maintain the purity of its distinguishing essence where it did not enter deep into the whole intellectual development of a people, and where, together with the divine life proceeding from it, it did not at the same time give an impulse to every branch of human improvement.

Irenæus is also the first to speak of the diffusion of Christianity in *Spain* (ἐν ταῖς Ἰβηρίαις). The tradition, which we meet with as early as the beginning of the fourth century in Eusebius,‡ that the Apostle Paul had preached the gospel in Spain, cannot, it is true, be received as a sufficient evidence: for in those times there existed a very strong propensity to convert into facts the weakest suppositions, presumptions, and conjectures. And so what St. Paul himself writes (Romans, xv. 24) concerning his intention might easily give rise to the report. But when the Roman bishop Clemens says§ that the Apostle Paul went to the utmost limit of the West (τέρμα τῆς δύσεως),|| we can scarcely understand such an expression as referring to Rome. Indeed, it naturally applies only to Spain. Now as Clemens was, in all probability, a disciple of the Apostle, it is hardly possible that he could have been deceived in such a matter, whatever might have been the case with those who came after him. Undoubtedly we cannot find room for such a journey of the Apostle St. Paul to Spain, unless we suppose that he was released from the imprisonment mentioned in the Acts, and after his release fulfilled the intention which he had previously expressed. And this we must of necessity conclude, so long as we acknowledge the genuineness

\* L. III. c. 4.

† Sine charta et atramento scriptam habentes per Spiritum in cordibus suis salutem.

‡ L. I. c. 10, s. 2.

§ Ep. I. v. 5.

|| We cannot avoid once more protesting against all the forced interpretations of these words which have been set forth of late. See my *History of the Planting, etc.*, Vol. I. p. 455.

of his second Epistle to Timothy, and cannot bring ourselves to adopt the forced interpretations which have been put on some of its passages.

Of the early propagation of Christianity in *Britain*, Tertullian is a witness;\* even though, from the rhetorical nature of the passage, there may be some little exaggeration in the statement that the gospel had already penetrated into those parts of Britain not subjected to the Roman dominion. A later tradition, given by Bede, in the eighth century, reports that Lucius, a British king, requested the Roman bishop Eleutherus, in the latter part of the second century, to send missionaries to that country. But the peculiarities of the later British church are evidence against its owing its origin to Rome; for in many ritual points it dissented from the usage of the Romish church, and agreed much more closely with the churches of Asia Minor. It withstood, for a long time, the authority of the Bishops of Rome. This circumstance seems to indicate that the Britons received Christianity, either immediately or through Gaul, from Asia Minor—a thing quite possible and easy by means of commercial intercourse. The later Anglo-Saxons, who opposed the ecclesiastical independence maintained by the Britons, and endeavoured to establish the supremacy of Rome, were uniformly disposed to trace back the establishment of the church to a Roman origin. From such an attempt this and many other false legends may have arisen.

We must now proceed to the conflicts with the state which the Church had to sustain within the Roman empire.

### 3. *Persecutions of the Christian Church.*

#### *First, the Causes of them.*

Fully to appreciate the nature of these persecutions, it is, in the first place, essential to understand their causes. It has often before this been a matter of surprise, that the Romans, a people otherwise so tolerant, should have shown so impatient and persecuting a spirit towards the Christians. But, in fact, these statements about the religious tolerance of the Romans require to be understood with much limitation. Ideas of the universal rights of man, of universal religious freedom and

\* Adv. Jud. c. 7.



liberty of conscience, were altogether foreign to the views of the ancient world. Nor could it well be otherwise: for with them the idea of the state was the highest idea of ethics—the end and realization of the supreme good. Consequently the development of whatever else is good, or an object of human desire, was made dependent on this. And so even the *religious* element also was subordinated to the *political*. They knew of none but state religions and national gods. It was Christianity that first of all and alone substituted more enlarged views for this narrow principle of antiquity. Instead of national deities, and the paramount obligation of political ties, it taught men to worship the one God of all human, and to see in all men alike the common image of that one God, while, in the place of the state as the centre of human interest, it substituted an universal kingdom of God, embracing and superior to all human polities. Looked at from this point of view, which was the one actually taken by the ancient world, a defection from the religion of the state could not appear otherwise than as a crime against the state.\*

Now all this especially applies to the ancient Roman world, with its exclusive political principle, which engrossed every other interest. Its influence is distinctly recognisable in the principle which Cicero lays down as a fundamental maxim of legislation.† No man shall have particular gods of his own; no man shall worship by himself any new or foreign gods, unless they have been publicly recognised by law (*nisi publice adscitos*). Although, in the times of the emperors, the ancient laws were no longer strictly observed, since foreign customs had been constantly gaining ground in Rome, and subverting the ancient policy; yet, on the other hand, there were many new reasons for zealously prohibiting the introduction of new religions. Thus, at this date, the greatest alarm pre-

\* As Varro had before distinguished a *theologia philosophica et vera*, a *theologia poetica et mythica*, and a *theologia civilis*, so Dio Chrysostom, who flourished in the first half of the second century, (*orat.* 12,) distinguishes three sources of religion—the universal religious consciousness, the *ἔμφυτος ἅπασιν ἀνθρώποις ἐπίνοια*; poetry and morality left free to propagate itself; and legislation, which constrains, threatens, and punishes,—*τὸ νομοθετικόν, τὸ ἀναγκάϊον, τὸ μετὰ ζημίας καὶ ποροστάξιν*—although he rightly makes the first to be the universal and original source from which all the rest has been derived.

† *De legib.* l. II. c. 8.

vailed of everything to which a political aim could attach itself, and the jealousy of despotism was quick to suspect political designs, even where nothing of the kind was intended. Religion and religious associations seemed well calculated to serve as a cover for political plots and conspiracies. This feeling suggested the advice of Mæcenas to Augustus, in the well-known discourse which is reported by Dio Cassius, where, although the historian may perhaps have put into the mouth of Mæcenas words which he never used, he yet expresses the prevailing sentiments of the Roman statesmen at this period: "Worship the gods in all respects according to the laws of your country, and compel all others to do the same. But those who would introduce anything foreign in this particular hate and punish; not merely for the sake of the gods and because whoever despises them is incapable of reverence for anything else, but because, by bringing in new divinities, such persons mislead many to adopt also foreign laws. Hence conspiracies and secret combinations—the last things to be tolerated in a monarchy. Suffer no man either to deny the gods\* or to practise sorcery." The Roman jurist, Julius Paulus, cites the following as one of the ruling principles of civil law in the Roman state: "Whoever introduces new religions, whose tendency and character are unknown, whereby the minds of men might be disturbed,† were, if belonging to the higher ranks, to be banished; if to the lower, punished with death. It is, then, at once evident, that Christianity, which produced so great, and to the Roman statesman so incomprehensible an agitation in the minds of men, would fall into the class of *religiones novæ*. For in this principle we have the two points of view presented under which Christianity would necessarily come into collision with the laws of the state. 1. *It seduced Roman citizens from the religion of the state, to the observance of which they were bound by the laws, and also from compliance with the "Cæremoniæ Romanæ."* Accordingly, many of the magistrates, who felt no *personal* antipathy to Christianity, urged the Christians who were brought before them to comply, at least outwardly, with what the laws required; viz., to observe the religious ceremonies prescribed by the state; and explained to them that the state concerned itself

\* Ἀθεΐα ἐῖναι, the very term applied to the Christians.

† De quibus animi hominum moventur.



only with the outward act, and that consequently, so long as these were performed, it would leave them free to believe and worship in their heart whatever they chose; that, in short, they might continue to worship their own God, provided only they would worship the Roman gods also. 2. *It introduced a new religion, not admitted by the laws of the state into the class of religiones licitæ.* Hence, according to Tertullian, the common taunt of the pagans against the Christians was—non licet esse vos—"you are not allowed by the laws;" and Celsus accuses them of secret associations, contrary to the laws.\*

Without doubt, the Romans did exercise a certain religious toleration, but it was, however, one which was so intimately dependent on their polytheistic ideas of religion, that, by its very nature, it could not admit of application. They were in the habit of securing to the conquered nations the free exercise of their own religions,† hoping thereby to gain them over more completely to their interests, and also to make friends of their gods. The Romans, who were religiously inclined, attributed their sovereignty of the world to this policy of conciliating the gods of every nation.‡ Even without the limits of their own country, individuals of these nations were allowed the free exercise of their opinions; and hence Rome, into which there was a constant influx of strangers from all quarters of the world, became the seat of every description of religion. "Men of a thousand nations," says Dionysius of Halicarnassus,§ "come to the city, and must worship the gods of their country, according to the laws which prevail at home." It frequently happened that many things borrowed from these foreign modes of worship were, with certain modifications, introduced into the public worship of the Roman state; but then a special decree of the senate was requisite before a Roman citizen could legally join in the observance of any such foreign rites. At this particular period, indeed, when

\* Ὅς συνθήκας χρύβδην παρὰ τὰ νομισμῖνα ποιουμένων. L. I. c. 1.

† See the words of Marcus Agrippa, in his plea for the religious freedom of the Jews: τὴν εὐδαιμονίαν, ἣν νῦν τὰ σύμπαν τῶν ἀνθρώπων γένος δι' ὑμᾶς ἔχει τούτω μιτροῦμιν, τῷ ἔξῃναι κατὰ χώραν ἰκδοτοῖς τὰ οἰκία τιμῶσιν ἄγειν καὶ διαζῆν. Joseph. Archæol. l. XVI. c. 2, s. 4.

‡ See the Pagan's language in Minucius Felix, and in Aristides' Encom. Romæ.

§ See Aristid. l. c. and Dionys. Halicarnass., Archæol. l. II. c. 19.

the authority of all national religions was on the wane; when the unsatisfied religious wants of man longed after some new thing; and when this was continually offered by the conflux to Rome of strangers from all quarters of the world,—it frequently happened that Romans adopted foreign modes of worship, which did not as yet belong to the religions recognised by the state (to the *religionibus publice adscitis*): but then this was an irregularity which old-fashioned Romans attributed to the corruptions of the times and the decline of ancient manners. Like many other evils which could not be suppressed, it was left unnoticed. The change, moreover, might be the less striking, since those who had adopted the foreign rites observed at the same time the *cæremoniæ Romanæ*. Occasionally, however, when the evil had become rampant, or when a zeal was awakened in behalf of the ancient manners and republican virtues, new laws were enacted for restraining profane rites (*ad coercendos profanos ritus*) and repressing the growth of foreign superstitions (the *valescere superstitiones externas*); \* every religion not Roman being regarded as a *superstition* by the Roman statesman. With these views, it is clear that the best emperors, whose object it was to restore the old life of the Roman state, must necessarily be hostile to Christianity, which appeared to them in no other light than as a “*superstitio externa* ;” while worse rulers, though not rising above the prejudices of a contracted nationality, but still as devoid of the old Roman prejudice, might, from indifference to the old Roman policy in general, calmly look on when Christianity was making encroachment on all sides.

Even the Jews had had the free and undisturbed exercise of their religion secured to them by decrees of the senate and imperial edicts, and the God of the Jews was regarded by many as a powerful national God. That people were condemned as narrow-minded and intolerant only because they hostilely excluded the worship of other gods; or by others the fault was laid to the jealous character of that Being himself, who would have no other gods besides. Judaism was a *religio licita* for the Jews; and it was therefore made a matter of re-

\* Tacitus places together, in a proposition to the senate, the phrases “*Publica circa bonas artes socordia, et quia externæ superstitiones valescant.*” *Annal.* l. XI. c. 15. A lady of rank is accused as *superstitionis rea*. *Annal.* l. XIII. c. 32.



proach to the Christians that they had contrived, by first coming forward as a Jewish sect, to creep in under the cover of a tolerated religion.\* Nevertheless, even the Jews were not allowed to propagate their religion among the *Roman* pagans, who were expressly forbidden, under heavy penalties, to undergo circumcision. No doubt, at this time, the number of proselytes that was made from the pagans was very great. This the public authorities sometimes overlooked; but occasionally severe laws were passed anew to repress the evil; as, for instance, by the senate under the emperor Tiberius,† and by Antoninus Pius and Septimius Severus.

The case was altogether different with Christianity. Here was no ancient national form of worship, as in all the other religions. Christianity appeared rather as a defection from a *religio licita*,—an insurrection against a venerable national faith.‡ This, in conformity with the prevailing mode of thinking, is charged against the Christians by Celsus.§ “The Jews,” he says, “are a peculiar people, and they observe a national worship, whatever may be its character; and in so doing they act like other men. It is right for every people to reverence their ancient laws, but to desert them is a crime.” Hence the very common taunt thrown out against the Christians, that they were neither one thing nor the other, neither Jews nor pagans, but a *genus tertium*. A religion for all mankind must have appeared, to all who entertained the ancient mode of thinking, a thing contrary to nature, threatening the dissolution of all existing order. The man that can believe it possible, says Celsus, for Greeks and Barbarians, in Asia, Europe, and Libya, to agree in one code of religious laws, must be utterly void of sense. || And yet, what was held to be impossible seemed every day more likely to be realized.

\* Sub umbraculo religionis saltem licitæ.—Tertullian.

† The senatus consultum de sacris Ægyptiis Judaicisque pellendis. Tacit. Annal. l. II. c. 85.

‡ A religion proceeding from an ἰστανσιακέναι πρὸς τὸ κοινὸν τῶν Ἰουδαίων. c. Cels. l. III. c. 7. For keeping the Christians united together ἀξίως χρεώσιν ὑπόθεσις καὶ στάσις, L. III. c. 14.

§ Δεῖν πάντας ἀνθρώπους κατὰ τὰ πάτρια ζῆν, οὐκ ἂν μεμψθέντας ἐπὶ τοῦτῳ. Χριστιανούς δὲ τὰ πάτρια καταλιπόντας καὶ οὐχ' ἐν τι τυχερανόντας ἔθνος ὡς Ἰουδαίους, ἐγκτήτως προστίθεσθαι τῇ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ διδασκαλίᾳ. L. V. c. 25.

|| His words are, Ὁ τοῦτο οἰόμενος εἶδεν οὐδέν. L. VIII. c. 72.

Christianity was seen to be making progress steadily among people of every rank, and threatening to overthrow the religion of the state, and with it the whole frame of civil society, which seemed closely interwoven with the former. Nothing remained, therefore, but to oppose the inward power, which men were unwilling to acknowledge, by outward force. The whole shape and form of the Christian worship, no less than the *idea* of a religion for mankind, was in direct contradiction to the opinion hitherto prevalent on religious matters. It excited suspicion to observe that the Christians had nothing of all that which was usually found in every other form of worship; nothing of all that which even the Jews had in common with the heathens. So Celsus calls it the token of a secret compact, of an invisible order, that the Christians alone have no altars, images, or temples.\* Again, the intimate brotherly union which prevailed among the Christians, the circumstance that every one among them, in every town where fellow-believers dwelt, immediately found friends who were dearer to him than all the friends of this world—this was something that men could not comprehend.† The Roman politicians were utterly unable to fathom the nature of the bond which so united the Christians with one another. The jealousy of despotism could everywhere easily see or fear political aims. To the Roman statesman, who had no conception of the rights of conscience, the unbending will, which could be forced by no fear and by no tortures to yield obedience to the laws of the state in reference to religion and to perform the prescribed ceremonies, appeared a blind obstinacy (*inflexibilis obstinatio*, as men called it). And in the eyes of rulers who were accustomed to servile obedience, such invincible determination must have appeared as something extremely dangerous. Many would be more ready to pardon the Christians for their neglect of the public worship of the gods, than their want of reverence for the emperors, and their refusal to take any part in those idolatrous demonstrations of homage which pagan flattery had invented, such as sprinkling their images with incense, and swearing by their genius. “I will assuredly,” said Tertullian, “call the emperor my lord—but in the ordinary acceptation ;

\* Πιστὸν ἀφανοῦς καὶ ἀπορρήτου κοινωνίας σύνδημα. L. VIII. c. 17.

† See the language of the Pagan in Minucius Felix, cited above, at page 105.



but not if I am forced to call him Lord in the place of God. In other respects I am free of him; for I have only one Lord—the Almighty and eternal God—the same who is also the emperor's Lord. How should he wish to be the *Lord*, who is the *father* of his country?"\* How strongly contrasted with this free, high-spirited sentiment of the Christian is the language of the supercilious and self-styled philosopher Celsus to the Christians: "Why should it be wrong, then, to seek favour with the rulers of men,† since, most assuredly, it is not without a divine providence that these have been exalted to the government of this world? And if you are required to swear by the emperor among men, this surely is nothing so very grievous; for whatever you receive in life you receive from him."‡ Whenever, on the anniversary of the emperor's accession, or at the celebration of a triumph, public festivals were appointed, the Christians alone kept away, to avoid that which was calculated to wound their religious or moral feelings, which was uncongenial with the temper of mind inspired by their faith. It is no doubt true that many carried this feeling to an extreme, and shrank from joining even in such demonstrations of respect and rejoicing as involved nothing that was repugnant to Christian faith and decorum, simply because in their minds they were associated with the pagan worship and customs, such, for example, as the illumination of their houses, and the decorating them with festoons of laurel.§ Thus on one occasion a sum of money was distributed by the emperor as a gratuity among the soldiers. When, as was customary, all the rest had presented themselves, with garlands on their heads, for the purpose of receiving their portion, a single Christian soldier came with the garland in his hand, because

\* Dicam plane imperatorem dominum, sed more communi, sed quando non cogor, ut dominum Dei vice dicam. Cæterum liber sum illi, dominus enim meus unus est, Deus omnipotens at æternus, idem qui et ipsius. Qui pater patriæ est, quomodo dominus est? Apologet. c. 34.

† Τὸς ἐν ἀνθρώποις δυνάστας καὶ βασιλέας ἔξουμενίζεσθαι.

‡ Δίδοται γὰρ τούτῳ τὰ ἐπὶ γῆς, καὶ ὅτι ἂν λαμβάνῃς ἐν τῷ βίῳ, παρὰ τούτου λαμβάνεις. c. Cels. l. VIII. e. 63 et 67.

§ Tertullian, in his book de idololatria, complains that so many Christians had no hesitation to take a share in such festivities. Christ, he observes, had said, Let your works shine, at nunc lucent tabernæ et januæ nostræ, plures jam invenies ethnicorum fores sine lucernis et laureis, quam Christianorum. De idololatria, c. 15.

he held the practice of crowning to be a pagan rite.\* Such acts were, indeed, but the extravagance of individuals or of a party; in which, however, the deep sincerity which prompted them deserved respect. But the majority were far from approving such excess of zeal. And yet the mistake of *individuals* was readily laid to the charge of all. Hence the accusation, so dangerous in those times, of high treason, (*crimen majestatis*), which was brought against the Christians. They were called "irreverent to the Cæsars, enemies of the Cæsars, of the Roman people" (*irreligiosos in Cæsares, hostes Cæsarium, hostes populi Romani*). In like manner, when only a small party of the Christians regarded the occupation of a soldier as incompatible with the nature of Christian love and of the Christian calling, it was converted into an accusation against all, and against Christianity generally. "Does not the emperor punish you justly?" says Celsus; "for should all do like you, he would be left alone,—there would be none to defend him; the rudest barbarians would make themselves masters of the world, and every trace, as well of your own religion itself, as of true wisdom, would be obliterated from the human race; for fancy not that your supreme God would come down from heaven and fight for us."†

If the Christians were accused generally of morosely withdrawing themselves from all commerce with the world and from the courtesies of civil and social life, this charge was grounded partly in the relation itself of Christianity to paganism, as it was understood by the prevailing habits of thought; but in part also it was owing to a certain one-sided tendency, which sprang out of the way in which the Christian life developed itself in opposition to paganism. Thus the Christians were represented as men dead to the world, and useless for all affairs of life; ‡ dumb in public—loquacious among themselves; and it was asked, what would become of the business of the world, if all men were like them?

Such were the causes which impelled the Roman governors to persecute the Christians; but all persecutions did not pro-

\* Tertullian wrote his book "*de corona militis*" in defence of this soldier's conduct which had been condemned by his fellow-believers.

† L. VIII. c. 68.

‡ *Homines infructuosi in negotio, in publico muti, in angulis garruli.* See the words of the Pagan in Minucius Felix.



ceed from the state. *The Christians were often victims of the popular fury.* The populace saw in them the enemies of their gods; and with them this was the same as having no religion at all. Deniers of the gods, Atheists, (*ἄθεοι*), were the titles by which the Christians were commonly designated among the people; and of such men the vilest and most improbable stories could easily gain credence. In their assemblies, it was generally reported, they abandoned themselves to unnatural lusts; they killed and devoured children. Accusations these, such as we find circulated, in the most diverse periods, against religious sects that have once become the objects of the fanatical hatred of the populace. The reports of discontented slaves, or of persons from whom torture had wrung whatever avowal was desired, were employed to support these absurd charges, and to justify the popular hatred. If in hot climates the long absence of rain occasioned a drought; if in Egypt the Nile failed to irrigate the fields; if in Rome the Tiber overflowed its banks; if a contagious disease was raging; if an earthquake, a famine, or any other public calamity occurred, the popular rage was easily turned against the Christians. "We may ascribe all this," was the cry, "to the anger of the gods on account of the spread of Christianity." Thus, according to Augustine, it had become a proverb in North Africa, "If there is no rain, lay the blame on the Christians."\* And what wonder if the people so judged, when one who set up for a philosopher, a Porphyry, assigned it as the cause for the inveteracy of a contagious and desolating sickness, that, by reason of the spread of Christianity, Esculapius could no longer exercise any influence on the earth.

There was, besides, no lack of *individuals* ready to excite the popular rage against the Christians—priests, artisans, and others, who, like Demetrius in the Acts, drew their gains from idolatry; magicians, who saw their juggling trickery exposed; sanctimonious Cynics, who found their hypocrisy unmasked by the Christians. When, in the time of the emperor Marcus Aurelius, the magician whose life has been written by Lucian, Alexander of Abonoteichus, observed that his arts of deception had ceased to gain credence in the cities, he exclaimed, "The Pontus is filled with atheists and Christians;" and called on the people to stone them, if they did not wish to draw down on

\* Non pluit Deus, duc ad Christianos.

themselves the anger of the gods. He would never exhibit his arts before the people, until he had first proclaimed, "If any Atheist, Christian, or Epicurean has sneaked in here as a spy, let him begone!" By the advocates of religion among the heathens, an appeal to popular violence seems, at this time, to have been considered the most convenient course.\* Justin Martyr knew that Crescens,—one of the common Pseudo-cynics of those days, who were sanctimonious demagogues,—attempted to stir up the people against the Christians, and had threatened Justin's own life, because he had laid bare his hypocrisy.

From these remarks on the causes of the persecutions, the conclusion is obvious *that, until Christianity had been received by express laws of the State into the class of lawful religions (religiones licitæ), the Christians could not enjoy any general and secure tranquillity in the exercise of their religion; and within the Roman empire they were constantly exposed to the rage of the populace and to the malice of individuals.*

We shall now proceed to consider the varying circumstances of the Christian Church, under the governments of the several emperors who were so differently affected towards it.

#### 4. *Situation of the Christian Church under the several Emperors.*

Tertullian relates† of the emperor Tiberius, that he was moved by Pilate's report of the miracles and resurrection of Christ to propose a bill to the senate, that Christ should be received among the gods of Rome; but that the senate rejected the proposition, that they might not renounce their ancient prerogative of determining all matters relating to "new religions" upon their own movement (*e motu proprio*). The emperor, however, he goes on to say, did not wholly desist from his purpose, but went so far as to threaten with severe penalties all such as should accuse the Christians merely on the ground of their religion. But an author of so uncritical a mind as Tertullian cannot possibly be received as a valid witness for a tale which wears on its face all the marks of

\* See the Timocles in Lucian's Jupiter Tragoed.

† Apologet. c. 5 et 21.



untruth. Should the account be considered as an exaggerated one, which has still some foundation of truth, it would be difficult to tell what it can be. We cannot even infer from it that the emperor ever proposed to grant to the Christians a free toleration. Both the character of Pilate makes it incredible that what he saw of Christ left so lasting an impression on his mind as this account assumes; and it is also improbable that any such effect would have been produced by his report on the mind of Tiberius. Moreover it would not be in keeping with the servility of the senate under Tiberius for them to act in the way ascribed to them in this account. Besides, as there were as yet no accusers of a Christian sect, there could have been no occasion for passing a law against such accusers. In fact, the subsequent history shows that no such law of Tiberius existed. Probably Tertullian allowed himself to be deceived by some spurious document.

At first the Christians were confounded with the Jews. Consequently the edict issued by the emperor Claudius, in the year 53, for the banishment of the turbulent Jews, would involve the Christians also, if there were any at that time in Rome, and especially if Christianity made its first converts there among Jews and they continued to observe the Jewish customs. Suetonius says, "The emperor Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome, who were constantly raising disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus." \* It might be supposed that some turbulent Jew, then living, of this name was intended, one perhaps of the numerous class of Jewish freedmen in Rome. But as no individual so universally well known as the expressions of Suetonius imply this Chrestus to have been is elsewhere mentioned; and as the name of Christus (*χρίστος*) was frequently pronounced Chrestus (*χρήστος*) by the pagans; it is highly probable this Suetonius, who wrote half a century after the event, throwing together what he had heard about the political expectations of a Messiah among the Jews, and the obscure and confused accounts which had reached him respecting Christ, may have been led to express himself in this vague and indefinite manner.

However, Christianity was making continual progress among the heathens in the Roman empire, and the worship of such converts, regulated in accordance with the principles

\* *Impulsore Chresto assidue tumultuantes Roma expulit.*

of the Apostle St. Paul, rendered it no longer possible to mistake the Christian for a Jewish sect. Such was the case particularly with the Roman communities, as the persecution which we shall soon have to mention will show; for it could not have arisen if the Christians had been held—as men who, being descended from Jews, observed the Mosaic laws—to be simply a sect of that people. They must already have drawn on themselves, in the capital of the world, the fanatical hatred of the populace, as the *tertium genus*, neither one thing nor the other. Already had the popular feeling given currency to those monstrous reports we so lately noticed, of unnatural crimes to which the secret sect of these enemies of the gods abandoned themselves.\* It was not the principles of the Roman constitution, but the popular hatred, that furnished the occasion for the first persecution of the Christians in Rome. Its immediate cause, however, was wholly accidental: and, moreover, that precisely so reckless a monster as Nero should be the first persecutor of the Christians, was likewise owing primarily to a concurrence of accidental circumstances. Yet there was something intrinsically significant in the fact that the very man who before all others had cast off all reverence for religious and moral obligation, who was the impersonation of human will revolting against all higher and diviner authority, should give the first impulse to the persecution of Christianity.

The moving cause which led Nero, in the year 64, to vent his fury upon the Christians, was originally nothing else than a wish to remove from himself the suspicion of being the author of the conflagration of Rome, and to fix the guilt on others. As the Christians were already the objects of popular hatred, and the fanatical mob were prepared to believe them capable of any flagitious crime that might be charged upon them, such an accusation, if brought against the Christians, would be most readily credited.† By inflicting sufferings on a class of men hated by the people, he would make himself popular, and at the same time gain fresh gratification for his satanic cruelty. All being seized whom the popular hatred had

\* We believe the passage in Tacitus (Annal. l. XV. c. 44), "per flagitia invidiosos, quos vulgus Christianos appellabat," must have reference to these reports.

† Abolendo rumori subdidit reos, says Tacitus of Nero.



stigmatized as Christians, and therefore profligate men,\* it might easily happen that some who were not really Christians would be included in the number. †

Those who were now arrested as Christians were, by the emperor's commands, executed in the most cruel manner. Some were crucified; others sown up in the skins of wild beasts and exposed to be torn in pieces by dogs; others, again, had their garments smeared over with some combustible material, and were then set on fire to illuminate the public gardens at night.

This persecution was not, indeed, in the first instance, a general one; but fell exclusively on the Christians in Rome, who were accused of being the incendiaries of the city. Yet what had occurred in the capital could not fail of being attended throughout all the provinces with serious consequences affecting the situation of the Christians, whose religion moreover was an unlawful one.

The impression which was left behind by this first and truly horrible persecution, at the hands of one who presented so remarkable a contrast to the great historical phenomenon of Christianity, long survived in the minds of the Christians. Nor was it altogether without truth if the image of Antichrist—the representative of that last reaction of the power of ungodliness against God's government of the world, and against Christianity—was transferred to so colossal an exhibition of self-

\* Quos per flagitia invisos vulgus Christianos appellabat, says Tacitus.

† In the interpretation of Tacitus' account of this transaction several points may be doubtful. When he says, *Primo correpti, qui fatebantur*, the question arises, what did they confess?—that they had caused the fire, or that they were Christians? When he says, *Deinde judicio eorum multitudo ingens haud perinde in crimine incendii, quam odio humani generis convicti sunt*, the question occurs, does the latter refer to all, to those that "confessed," as well as the rest,—so that in this case all are pronounced by Tacitus free from the alleged crime of being the authors of the conflagration; or do the words refer only to the "*multitudo ingens*," so that the first-named class, "*qui fatebantur*," were designated as being really guilty of setting fire to the city? If the latter be the case, and if the *fateri* is to be referred to the *incendium*, and the whole account deserves confidence, we must suppose these to be persons actually employed by Nero for the perpetration of the deed;—not Christians, but men whom, as hated and abominable, the people designated by the name of Christians. These perhaps, with the hope of bettering their fate, may then have denounced as Christians many others, of whom some may have really been, and others were not such.

will, which rebelled against all holy restraints, and yet yearned after the unnatural,\* as the character of Nero presented. It is a fact frequently observed, that the impression left by a man in whom some great movement of the history of the world has been exhibited, or from whom a great power of destruction has gone forth, is not immediately effaced. Room is scarcely allowed for the thought that such a person has really ceased to exist. Examples of such a phenomenon are furnished by the cases of the emperor Frederic II. and of Napoleon. So it was in the case of this monstrous exhibition of the power of evil. The rumour long prevailed among the heathens that Nero was not dead, but had retired to some place of secrecy, from which he would again make his appearance,†—a rumour which, for their own ends, several adventurers and impostors took advantage of. The legend assumed also a Christian dress, under which it ran that Nero had retired beyond the Euphrates, and would return as Antichrist,‡ to finish what he had already begun, the destruction of that Babylon, the capital of the world.

The despotic Domitian, who ascended the imperial throne in 81, was in the practice of encouraging informers, and so, under various pretexts, contrived to get rid of those persons who had excited his suspicions or his cupidity. In this reign, therefore, the charge of embracing Christianity would, after that of high treason (*crimen majestatis*), § be the most common one. In consequence of such accusations many were condemned to death, or to the confiscation of their property and banishment to an island. ||

\* A characteristic trait of Nero, as described by Tacitus,—“*incredibilium cupitor*.” *Annal.* l. XV. c. 42.

† The words of Tacitus are, *Vario super exitu ejus rumore eoque pluribus vivere eum fingentibus credentibusque*. *Hist.* l. II. c. 8.

‡ In the Pseudo-Sibylline books: *Εἴτ' ἀνακάμψι ἰσάζων θεῶν αὐτόν*.

§ The words of Dio Cassius, l. LXVII. c. 14: “*Ἐγκλημα ἀθεότητος, ὅφ' ἦ, καὶ ἄλλοι εἰς τὰ τῶν Ἰουδαίων θεῶν ἑξοκίλλοντες πολλοὶ κατεδικασθήσαν*.” The charge of ἀθεότης, combined with that of an inclination to Jewish customs, may allude to Christianity, unless ἀθεότης is to be understood as barely referring to the denial of the gods of the state religion. At all events, the charge of ἀθεότης, if applied to the embracing of Judaism, which was at least the worship of a well-known national god, and for the Jews a lawful religion, could, *à fortiori*, be brought against the conversion to Christianity.

|| Besides Dio Cassius, another historian, cited in the chronicle of



The emperor moreover was secretly informed that there were living in Palestine two individuals of the race of David and Jesus, who were engaged in seditious undertakings. The seditious tendency of the Jewish expectations of a Messiah were well known, and the language of the Christians, in speaking of the kingdom of Christ, was often misunderstood.\* Domitian caused the accused to be brought before him, and, having convinced himself that they were poor innocent countrymen, who were very far from engaging in any political schemes, he allowed them to return home in peace.† But from this act of mildness it cannot certainly be inferred that the emperor revoked those measures which had been adopted against the Christians generally, and for which he had other motives.‡

The emperor Nerva, who assumed the government in the year 96, was by the natural justice and philanthropy of his character altogether an enemy to that system of information and sycophancy which had been the occasion of so much evil in the time of his predecessors. This of itself was favourable to the Christians, inasmuch as the crime of adopting their religion had been one of the most common grounds of accusation. Nerva set at liberty those who had been condemned on charges of this nature, and recalled such as had been banished. He also ordered all slaves and freed men, who had informed against their masters, to be executed. He forbade generally the information of slaves against their masters to be received. All this must have been a benefit to the Christians, since the complaints which were brought against them proceeded frequently from ill-disposed slaves. Such accusations and charges as had furnished the matter of the majority of condemnations under the preceding reign could no longer be brought forward, and in this general regulation Christianity

Eusebius, namely, Bruttius, says that many suffered martyrdom under the reign of this emperor.

\* For evidence of this, see Justin Martyr (Apolog. I. II. c. 58).  
 Ἀκούσαντες βασιλίαν προσδοκῶντας ἡμᾶς, ἀκρίτως ἀνθρώπινον λέγειν ἡμᾶς ὑπελήφατε.

† Hegesippus in Euseb. I. III. c. 19 and 20.

‡ Tertullian certainly expresses himself in too general a manner when he says (Apologet. c. 5) that Domitian made but one attempt to persecute the Christians; but that he desisted from his purpose, and recalled those that had been banished.

was probably included.\* Thus, the complaints against the Christians must have been suspended during the short reign of Nerva, it is true; lasting tranquillity, however, was far from being secured to them, for their faith was not recognised by any public act as a *religio licita*. It is therefore easily conceivable, that if, during these few years, Christianity was permitted to spread itself without opposition, the fury of its enemies, which had been for a while held in check, would break forth with fresh violence on this emperor's death.

And this was actually the case under the reign of Trajan, after the year 99. As this emperor was a statesman in the Roman sense, he could not well overlook the encroachments on all sides of a religious community so entirely repugnant in its character to the Roman spirit. And the law which, for the purpose of suppressing the factious element in many districts, he had issued against close associations (the *Hetæriæ*), might easily be turned against the Christians, who formed a party so closely united together. It was at this time (A.D. 110) the younger Pliny, whose noble susceptibility to all that is pure in humanity, shines forth so amiably in his letters, came, as proconsul, to Bithynia and Pontus, countries in which the Christians were very numerous. Many of them were brought before his tribunal. He found himself in some perplexity, as such transactions were altogether new to him, as there was no definite law on the matter, except the general principles of the civil code of the empire, relating to "*religiones novæ et peregrinæ*," and especially as the number of the accused was so great. "For many," he writes to the emperor, "of every age and rank, and of both sexes, are involved in the danger; for the contagion of this superstition has seized not only cities, but also the villages and open country." The temples were almost deserted, the ordinary rites of worship had for a long time been interrupted, and victims for sacrifice were rarely purchased.† Pliny, like a lover of justice, did not allow himself to be biassed by vague reports and prejudices, but took all pains to inform himself as to the character of the Christian

\* Dio Cassius mentions, in connection with the *crimen majestatis*, the charge of *ἀσέβεια*, also of the *ἰουδαϊκὸς βίος*, although certainly by *ἀσέβεια* we are not to understand the *ἀθεότης*, or Christianity.

† Plin. l. X. ep. 97. *Prope jam desolata templa, sacra solennia diu intermissa, victimæ, quarum adhuc rarissimus emtor inveniebatur.*



sect. He questioned such as had for many years been separated from the Christian community; and apostates, we must remember, are usually little inclined to speak well of the society to which they formerly belonged. Following the cruel custom of Roman justice, which knew nothing of man's universal rights, he applied the torture to two female slaves, who held the office of deaconesses in the Christian communities, for the purpose of extorting from them the truth. And yet all that he could learn was only that the Christians were accustomed to meet together on a certain day (Sunday); that they sang together a hymn in praise of their God, Christ; and that they bound one another,\* not to the commission of crimes,† but to abstain from theft, from adultery; never to break their word; to withhold from none the property intrusted to their keeping;‡ that after this they separated, and met again in the evening at a simple and innocent meal.§ And even these latter assemblies they had discontinued, in obedience to the emperor's edict against the *Hetæriæ*.

If now we compare Pliny with his friend Tacitus, so far as it concerns their treatment of Christianity, we must assign to the former the merit of greater freedom and impartiality of judgment. Tacitus, without entering into any investigation of facts, allowing himself to be swayed by his prejudices against everything not Roman, condemns at once a religion which came from the Jews, and whose founder had been executed by the order of a Roman governor, and which, moreover, found its most numerous adherents among people of the lower class, and gives credence to all the popular reports about it which fell in with those prejudices. He reckons Christianity among the many atrocious and shameless things which from all quarters flowed together to Rome, and found sympathy in the great capital of the world.|| He sees in it nothing but an *exitiabilis superstitio*—in the Christians only

\* An allusion to the baptismal vow, the sacramentum militiæ Christianæ, to which there is frequent reference in the practical homilies.

† A plain contradiction of those popular rumours respecting the objects had in view in the secret assemblies among the Christians.

‡ Whoever by such a sin violated his baptismal vow was excluded from the fellowship of the church.

§ Plainly in contradiction of the popular rumours respecting those unnatural repasts of the Christians, the epulæ Thyestææ.

|| Quo cuncta undique atrociora aut pudenda confluent celebranturque.

*homines per flagitiis invisos*, men hateful for their crimes, and deserving of the severest punishments.\* Pliny, on the other hand, does not allow himself to be hurried at once to a conclusion by his own prejudices or prevailing rumours. Before he decides he considers it his duty to enter into a careful investigation of the case. The result of his inquiry was as favourable to the Christians as it could be in a judgment based on purely moral grounds, which could not recognise the general right of mankind to freedom of worship. But Pliny shared in common with Tacitus the partial and contracted views of the Roman statesman, which prevented him from rising to that elevated position. He saw in a religion which absorbed the whole man, and made them forgetful of every other interest, nothing but a *superstitio prava* † — or, as we might express it, by employing the term of modern phraseology, a gloomy pietism. Looking upon religion as a matter of the state, he required unconditional submission to the laws of the empire. With the character of the religion he had nothing to do. Whatever that might be, still disobedience of the imperial laws must be severely punished.‡

The Christians must deny their faith, invoke the gods, offer incense and pour out libations before the image of the emperor, as well as those of the gods, and curse Christ. If they refused so to do, and, after having been thrice called upon by the governor to abjure their faith, still firmly avowed that they were Christians, and would remain so, Pliny condemned them to death as obstinate confessors of a *religio illicita*, who dared publicly defy the laws of the empire. They who complied with the governor's requisition obtained pardon.

It is no wonder, when we consider the rapid and powerful spread of Christianity in this country, if the faith of many who had adopted the religion during the peaceful times of Nerva was not of a nature to stand the fiery trial of persecution. Sudden and extensive conversions of this kind are not apt to prove the most thorough. So was it found in the present case. Many who had embraced Christianity, or were on the

\* *Sontes et novissima exempla meritos.*

† Not *exitiabilis*, because he was obliged to acknowledge that the Christians were blameless in their lives.

‡ His words are, *Neque enim dubitabam, qualecunque esset, quod faterentur, pervicaciam certe et inflexibilem obstinationem debere puniri.*



point of embracing it, drew back at the threatening prospect of death, and the consequences of this change were visible in the increase of the numbers who participated in the public religious ceremonies.

When he saw the effect of his measures, Pliny fell into the mistake which statesmen, however, have often committed in judging of matters which pertain to man's profoundest and most irrepressible feelings. The happy issue which for the moment seemed to follow the course he had adopted led him to hope that by degrees the new sect might easily be suppressed by a continuance of the same measures—if severity were prudently blended with mildness; if the obstinate were punished to terrify the others, while such as were disposed to retract were not driven to desperation by the refusal of pardon.

In submitting the report of these transactions to Trajan,\* he requested the emperor's advice particularly on the following points: Whether a distinction ought to be made for difference of age, or the young and tender were to be treated precisely in the same way with the more mature?† whether any time might be allowed for repentance, or every person who had once been a Christian was in any case to be punished? whether the Christians were liable to punishment simply as such, or only on account of other offences? It is plain, from the judicial proceedings of Pliny above described, how, according to his own view of the case, most of these questions ought to be answered. The emperor approved of these proceedings; and, in deciding the questions submitted to his authority, he went on the same principles. The Christians were not regarded by him in the light of ordinary criminals, for whom the governors in the provinces caused search to be made by the police.‡ They were not to be sought after; but when information was lodged against any, and they were brought before the tribunal, they must be punished. In *what way* the emperor does not explain; he even admits that on this point no certain rule of general application could be

\* L. X. ep. 97. This report of Pliny, which we have followed thus far, bears the indubitable marks of genuineness on its face. No one but the Roman statesman could so write on the affair.

† This question was probably occasioned by the fact that *many children and youth* (see above) were found among the Christians.

‡ The *σηνδαρχοις*, Curiosi.

given.\* It appears, however, that the punishment was generally understood to be death. Moreover, Trajan accorded pardon to such as manifested repentance.

Tertullian has attempted to show that this decision involved a contradiction. If, he argued, the emperor considered the Christians to be guilty, he ought to have ordered that they, like other criminals, should be sought out and delivered over to punishment; but if he regarded them as innocent, punishment was in all cases unjust. Without doubt this is a correct judgment, if the matter is looked at purely in its moral aspect. But this was not the view of it taken by the emperor. He stood in the position of a *politician* and a *judge*, governed by the laws of the Roman state. He was of the opinion that open contempt of the "Roman ceremonies," open resistance to the laws of the empire, could not, in any case, be permitted to go unpunished, even though no act *morally* culpable were connected with it.† The emperor, therefore, believed himself *obliged* to proceed, whenever such unlawful conduct attracted public attention; but he wished, as far as possible, to ignore it, in order that *indulgence* might be exercised to the fullest extent that was compatible with a due regard for the laws. Agreeing with Pliny that Christianity was but a fanatical delusion, *he*, too, probably imagined that if severity were tempered with clemency, if too much notice were not taken of the matter, and if open offences were neither suffered to go unpunished nor prosecuted with rigour, the hot enthusiasm would soon cool down into indifference, and the cause gradually expire of its own accord. And, in fact, if Christianity had been animated by no higher principle, the result would have realized the emperor's expectation.

But the rescript of Trajan produced an important change. Christianity, which hitherto had *tacitly* passed for an "unlawful religion" (a *religio illicita*), was now condemned as such by an *express law*.‡ It was the emperor's design

\* Neque enim in universum aliquid, quod quasi certam formam habeat, constitui potest.

† Like Pliny; see his language cited on page 136, note †.

‡ According to a document preserved in the chronicle of Johannes Malalas (l. XI. p. 273, ed Niebuhr), Tiberianus, Præfect of Palestina prima, had informed the emperor that the Christians offered themselves in crowds, and that nothing could be accomplished by the shedding of blood. Moved by this information, the emperor issued a new edict, for-



that the Christians should be subjected only to legal trials; but an impulse had now been given to a movement to which no limits could be fixed. With the political opposition to Christianity there was associated religious hatred, which exercises a far greater power over the passions of men. Open war was now proclaimed by heathenism against the spiritual power that threatened its destruction. The fanatical rage of the populace could now believe that it was supported by the law, and the Christians were left exposed to their assaults. The first outbreak of this kind was in the early years of Hadrian's reign, who was elevated to the imperial throne in 117. There were governors who looked on the shedding of human blood with indifference, and who were very ready to sacrifice persecuted men to the popular fury, either from a wish to gain for themselves the good will of their provinces, or because they themselves shared the fanaticism of the people. They might believe that they could pursue this course with impunity, if not with the emperor's approbation, as they knew he was ardently attached to the sacred customs (the *sacra*) of his country. When, in the year 124, he made a tour through Greece, and had himself initiated into all the Hellenic mysteries, the enemies of Christianity thought it a favourable time to commence their persecutions of the hated sect. The two learned Christians, Quadratus and Aristides, were hence induced to present to the emperor two apologies in behalf of their companions in the faith. But a still greater influence than could possibly be looked for from such apologetic writings was doubtless pro-

bidding the execution of the Christians. If we are disposed to doubt the genuineness of the writing here communicated, it is not because of the name "Galileans," which is applied to the Christians in no other document of *this period*. There might have been some particular local reason for the employment of this name. But when Tiberian says that he had not become tired of destroying the Christians, this assuredly does not agree very well with the above-cited rescript of Trajan, which expressly forbids the Christians *to be sought after*. And the statement that the Christians hastened to give themselves up hardly agrees with the times. It was the more violent persecutions which first called forth such an enthusiastic tendency. Neither can we regard the report of the martyrdom of the bishop Ignatius of Antioch as a document belonging to this period. In this narrative we do not recognise the emperor Trajan, and therefore feel ourselves compelled to entertain doubts with regard to everything reported in it; as, for example, that Christians were, even in the reign of this emperor, thrown to wild beasts.

duced on an emperor who loved justice and social order by the representations of Serrenius Granianus, proconsul of Asia Minor, who complained of the disorderly attacks of the populace on the Christians. In consequence of this complaint, the emperor issued a rescript to his successor in office, Minucius Fundanus.\*

Hadrian declared himself decidedly adverse to a practice which laid the innocent open to be disturbed, and gave opportunity to false accusers of extorting money by threats of bringing before the tribunal such as were suspected of Christianity.† No accusations against Christians were to be received, but such as were in the legal form; the Christians were no longer to be arrested on mere popular clamour. When legally brought to trial, and convicted of acting contrary to the laws,‡ they were to be punished according to their deserts; but a severe punishment was also to be inflicted on false accusers. Similar rescripts were sent by the emperor to many other provinces.§ If by the words of this rescript, "acting contrary to the laws," criminal conduct were meant, or any infraction of civil order, without reference to religion,

\* The genuineness of the rescript is proved, not only by its being cited in an apology which the bishop Melito of Sardis addressed to the second successor of this emperor (Euseb. l. IV. c. 26), but still more clearly by its contents; for it cannot be supposed that a Christian would have been contented with saying so little to the advantage of his fellow-believers. That Hadrian treated the Christians with gentleness appears evident from the praise bestowed on him by some Christian, who probably wrote not long after this time, in the fifth book of the Pseudo-Sibyllines: Ἀργυρόκρανος ἀνὴρ, τῷ δ' ἔσσιταί τ' οὐνομα πόντου, ἔσται καὶ πανάριστος ἀνὴρ καὶ πάντα νοήσει.

† I am of the opinion that Rufinus had before him the Latin original, but that Eusebius, as usual, has not translated with sufficient accuracy. Eusebius says (l. VI. c. 9), ἵνα μὴ τοῖς συκοφάνταις χορηγία κακουργίας παρασχῇ. Rufinus, ne calumniatoribus latrocinandi tribuatur occasio. It is not easy to see how it could ever occur to Rufinus to translate the general term, κακουργία, into the special one, latrocinatio, when the context furnished no occasion whatsoever for such a change; while, on the other hand, it is easy to see how Eusebius might loosely employ a general term to express the special one of the original. Latrocinari is here synonymous with concutere elsewhere. Tertullian's words to the governor Scapula, when the latter began to appear as a persecutor, may serve to explain the sense: Parce provinciæ, quæ, visa intentione tua, obnoxia facta est concussionibus et militum et inimicorum suorum cujusque.

‡ Eos adversum leges quicquam agere.

§ According to Melito of Sardis. See Euseb. l. IV. c. 26.



we should be obliged to consider it as a virtual edict of toleration, whereby Christianity was received into the class of "lawful religions;" but had this been the emperor's intention, he would certainly have explained more distinctly what he meant by acts contrary to the laws. A particular declaration, distinctly expressed, was evidently required, after the rescript of Trajan, unless the very omission was intended to operate to the disadvantage of the Christians.\* Hadrian's rescript was properly directed only against the attacks of the excited populace on such as were reported to be Christians; it only went to require a legal form of trial, which also had been the decision of Trajan. At best, those who were so disposed might turn the vague expressions of the rescript to the advantage of the Christians.† It was not so much his regard for Christianity, or the Christian people, as his love of justice, that led the emperor to the adoption of these measures; for Hadrian, as we have already remarked, was a strict and zealous follower of the old Roman, and, it may be added, the old Grecian religions, and looked with disdain upon all the rites of foreigners.‡ This temper of mind shines out through the remarkable letter which the emperor wrote to the consul Servianus.§ Christianity in itself forms, it is true, no part of the subject of this letter; it is only introduced by the way. He is speaking simply of the multifarious and restless activity of the Alexandrians, of their character, as meddlers and busy-bodies, and of the

\* If Melito of Sardis (l. c.) says afterwards to the Emperor Marcus Aurelius that his ancestors had honoured Christianity together with other modes of worship, *πρὸς ταῖς ἄλλαις θεησεύαις ἐτίμησαν*, very little can be inferred from this; for whoever claimed an emperor's protection for Christianity would naturally make the most of what had been done, or seemed to have been done, for the Christians by his predecessors.

† Tertullian (ad Scapulam, c. 5) cites the examples of two magistrates who took advantage of this rescript to procure the acquittal of Christians. Vespronius Candidus dismissed a Christian who had been arraigned before him, because it was contrary to good order to follow the clamour of the multitude (*quasi tumultuosum civibus satisfacere*). Another, Pudens, observing, from the information (*elogium*) with which a Christian was sent before him, that he had been seized with threats and in a disorderly manner (*concussione ejus intellecta*), dismissed him, with the remark that he could not, conformably with law, try men where there was no certain legal accuser.

‡ Vid. Ælius Spartian. *vita Hadriana*, c. 22.

§ Flavii Vopisci Saturninus, c. 8.

peculiar religious *syncretism* which had sprung up in that centre of the commerce of the world. A vein of sarcasm runs through the whole. "Those who worship Serapis," says Hadrian, "are Christians, and those who call themselves bishops of Christ are worshippers of Serapis. There is no ruler of a synagogue, no Samaritan, no presbyter of the Christians, who is not an astrologer, a soothsayer. The patriarch of the Jews himself, when he comes to Egypt, is forced by one party to worship Serapis, by the other, Christ.\* Their one God is none. Him, Christians, Jews, and all races, worship alike."† He touches on Christianity merely as one element in this mixture of religions. The picture floating before his mind is rather the general aspect of Alexandrian life, or such exhibitions of it as might be presented, for example, in the Gnostic sects, which there started into existence as purely Christian communities. At the same time, it is impossible not to perceive from this description how *very* far Hadrian was from respecting Christianity, or *monotheistic* religion generally.

The account, therefore, appears incredible, which we have from *Ælius Lampridius*,‡ an historian belonging to the early part of the fourth century, that the emperor, having an intention to place Christ among the Roman gods, caused, in all the cities, temples to be erected, without images, which were called "Hadrian's temples" (*templa Hadriani*);§ but that, by the representations of the priests, he was prevented from carrying out his design. This report, in all probability, had the same source as so many other fictitious legends,—the desire of accounting for something, the true cause of which was unknown; in the present case, from the desire of explaining the object of these temples, which had been left,

\* Illi, qui Serapim colunt, Christiani sunt, et devoti sunt Serapi. qui se Christi episcopus dicunt. Nemo illic archisynagogus Judæorum, nemo Samarites, nemo Christianorum presbyter non mathematicus. non haruspex, non aliptes. Compare this with Juvenal's description of the braggart disposition, the boastful pretension to clear understanding of all matters, which characterized the class whom he calls "Græculi." Sat. III. v. 75.

† Unus illis Deus nullus est. Hunc Christiani, hunc Judæi, hunc omnes venerantur et gentes.

‡ Alex. Sever. c. 24.

§ 'Αδριανῖα, mentioned already in Aristid. orat. sacr. 1.



unfinished. United with this was the exaggerated opinion, which a few misapprehended facts had given rise to, of the emperor's favourable disposition towards Christianity. On so slender a foundation men thought themselves warranted to impute to Hadrian a mode of thinking which was really found in some of his successors,—as, for instance, in Alexander Severus.

Under this government, however, so favourable to the Christians in the Roman empire, they suffered a serious persecution in another quarter. A certain Barcochba,—who pretended to be the Messiah, and under whom, as their leader, the Jews once more revolted against the Romans,—endeavoured to prevail on the Christians in Palestine to renounce their faith, and join in the insurrection. Failing of his purpose, he caused those that fell into his hands to be put to death in the most cruel manner.

After the death of Hadrian, A.D. 138, the rescripts issued by him lost their authority. At the same time, under his successor, Antoninus Pius, various public calamities, a famine, an inundation of the Tiber, earthquakes in Asia Minor and in the island of Rhodes, ravaging fires at Rome, Antioch, and Carthage, rekindled the popular fury against the Christians to greater violence than ever.\* The mild and philanthropic emperor could not approve of such unjust treatment of a part of his subjects. In different rescripts, addressed to Grecian States, he declared his disapprobation of these violent proceedings. The indulgence shown by this emperor to the Christians would appear to have been carried to a still greater length if we may regard as genuine a rescript to be ascribed in all probability to him, (not to his successor, Marcus Aurelius,) and addressed to the Assembly of Deputies in Asia Minor (πρὸς τὸ κοινὸν τῆς Ἀσίας). For in this he decides expressly that the Christians were to be punished only when convicted of political crimes; that, on the other hand, whoever accused them on the score of their religion should be liable himself to prosecution. But the author of this rescript speaks rather the language of a Christian than of a pagan emperor, especially of one whose distinguishing praise was his "singular and scrupulous regard for the public ceremonies," (*insignis erga cærimonias publicas cura et religio*. "*Fabretti*

\* *Julii Capitolini vita Antonini Pii*, c. 9.

*marmor.*") Subsequent history, moreover, does not notice the existence of such an edict.\*

Under the reign of the next emperor, Marcus Aurelius the philosopher, A.D. 161, many public calamities occurred, particularly a destructive pestilence, whose ravages gradually extended through the whole Roman empire, from Ethiopia to Gaul. Such events could not fail to produce on the feelings of the multitude the usual impression to the prejudice of "the enemies of the gods." It was at this time that the magician Alexander of Abonoteichos stirred up the zeal of the people for their gods, by promising them miraculous aid from these higher powers, and exasperating their hatred against the Christians. If, however, the persecutions in this reign had only sprung from popular hatred, Aurelius, had he been similarly disposed with his predecessors, might easily have restrained these popular outbreaks by the influence of his administration. But, instead of this, we now see the highest authorities of the state leagued with the people in the cause of oppression. In Asia Minor, the Christians were persecuted with such extreme violence, that Melito, bishop of Sardis, who appeared as their advocate before the emperor, said,† "The race of God's worshippers in this country are persecuted as they never were before, by *new edicts*; for the shameless sycophants, greedy of others' possessions,—being furnished by these edicts with the desired opportunity,—plunder their innocent victims day and night. And we object not to this, if it is done by your command, since a just emperor will never resolve on any unjust measure; and we will cheerfully bear the honourable lot of such a death. Yet we would submit this one petition, that you would inform yourself respecting the people who are thus treated, and impartially decide whether they deserve punishment and death, or deliverance and peace. But if this resolution, and this new edict,—an edict which ought not thus, without inquiry, to be issued even against hostile barbarians,—comes not from yourself, we pray you the more not to leave us exposed to such public robbery."

\* Eusebius, it is true, says that Melito of Sardis refers to this rescript in his apology addressed to the succeeding emperor. But it is remarkable that Melito, in the fragment introduced by Eusebius, *fails* to quote *this* rescript, though it would have been far more favourable to the Christians than the edict he actually cites.

† Euseb. l. IV. c. 26.



These words of Melito, in which he shows no less of Christian dignity than of Christian prudence, suggest many reflections. Even according to the edict of Trajan, *Christians once accused might be punished with death*; and this edict had never been officially revoked, though the clemency of the last emperors may have operated to prevent its being rigorously executed. But Melito says that a new and terrible edict had been issued by the proconsul, *inviting men to lodge informations against the Christians*. This is the more extraordinary, as it happened in the reign of an emperor who was by no means favourable to the irregular practice of informers,\* and whose general policy was to diminish the existing penalties.† Yet we can hardly suppose that the proconsul ventured to issue a new edict on his own responsibility. Indeed Melito himself seems not to have doubted that the edict proceeded from the emperor. His expressions of doubt were necessary to enable him, with due respect for the imperial authority, to invite a repeal of the obnoxious edict.

Perhaps by glancing at the philosophical and religious system of Marcus Aurelius, and considering it in its relation to Christianity, we shall be better able to understand his views and conduct with regard to it. The Stoical philosophy was not calculated to make him friendly disposed towards the Christians. What he esteemed as the highest attainment of human virtue was a composure in the prospect of death, which proceeded from cool reflection and conviction on scientific grounds—the resignation of the sage, ready to surrender even personal existence to the annihilation demanded by the iron law of the universal whole. But the enthusiasm, springing out of a lively faith, and of a well-assured hope grounded on that faith, with which the Christians met death, was a thing altogether unintelligible to him. A conviction which could not by arguments of reason be communicated to all appeared to him as nothing but fanaticism; and the way in which many Christians, really under fanatical excitement, even courted death, tended to confirm him in these views. Like Pliny and Trajan, he, too, could see nothing in disobedience to the laws of the empire on matters of religion but blind obstinacy.

We will here transcribe the emperor's own language re-

\* Julii Capitolini vita, c. 11.

† L. c. c. 24.

specting the Christians, as we find it in his *Meditations*.\* “The soul,” he says, “should be ready, when the time has come for it to depart from the body, either to be extinguished, to be dissolved, or else to subsist a while longer with the body. But this readiness must proceed from its own judgment, and not from mere obstinacy,† as is the case with the Christians; it must also be the result of reflection and dignity, so that you could even convince another without declamation.” Judging the Christians from this point of view, though, in other respects, he deemed them guilty of nothing immoral, and disbelieved, perhaps, the popular rumours which had been so often refuted, he might still regard them as enthusiasts, dangerous to social order. When, moreover, he observed how Christianity, under the recent mild governments, had constantly been making encroachments on all sides, he might perhaps feel himself called upon to check its further progress by energetic measures.

Marcus Aurelius was something more than the mere Roman statesman and the Stoic philosopher. He was also a man of a childlike piety of disposition, which he owed, as he himself tells us,‡ to the influence of a pious mother on his education. And assuredly he had thus received something more substantial and more valuable than anything that an abstract religion of reason could have given him. To the question (often proposed to the Christians), Where hast thou seen the gods, or whence hast thou learnt their *existence*, that you so reverence them, he answers—“In the first place, they make themselves visible even to the eye of sense;” where we may suppose he had in mind either those visible deities, the heavenly bodies, or, what is more probable, appearances of the gods in visions and dreams. “But again, I have never seen my own soul, and yet I treat it with reverence. So, too, I come to know the existence of the gods, because I constantly experience the effects of their power, and hence I honour them.” § And certainly there was truth lying at the ground of those experiences, although Marcus Aurelius knew not the “unknown God” from Whom they came, and to Whom they were designed to lead him, as the God of revelation. Thus he says, for ex-

\* L. XI. c. 3.

† Μὴ κατὰ ψιλὴν παράταξιν, ἀτραγῶδως, pervicacia, obstinatio.

‡ Παρὰ τῆς μητρὸς τὸ θεοσεβές.

§ L. XII. c. 23.



ample, on a retrospect of the divine providence which had guided him from childhood, "So far as it depended on the gods, I might, by the influences which came from them, and by their aids and suggestions, have attained long since to a life in harmony with nature. If, however, I still fall short of this mark, it is my own fault, and it must be ascribed to my negligence in following the admonitions, I might almost say the express instructions, of the gods."\* We find traces in his writings of honest self-examination. He was very far, we also see, from confounding *himself* with the ideal of the sage, and a sense of his own deficiency disposed him to forbearance towards others. It is true, this kind of self-knowledge, which, in the case of others, led the way to Christianity, could not conduct him thither, because in interpreting these internal experiences he had recourse to his Stoical doctrine of fatalism, which made the bad, no less than the good, necessary to the realization of the harmony of the universe. And in regard to this, also, he found comfort in a stoical resignation; for, says he, "When thou seest others sin, reflect that thou thyself sinnest in various ways, and art such as they are. And though thou abstainest from many sinful actions, yet thou hast within the inclination to commit them, though thou mayest be restrained from indulging it by fear, by vanity, or some such motive."† He belonged to the class of those, who, like the Platonists above mentioned, were seeking for a middle way between superstition and infidelity. He desired a cheerful piety, without superstition. He believed honestly, as must be evident from the passages above quoted, in the reality of the gods, and of their manifestations. With other devout pagans of his time, he was convinced that the gods, by sending dreams to those that honoured them, revealed the knowledge of the remedies for bodily disease, and imagined that he had himself had, in several cases of sickness,‡ experience of such assistance. When the pestilence, already mentioned, was raging in Italy, he looked upon it as a warning to the nation to restore the ancient worship in its minutest particulars. He summoned priests from all quarters to Rome, and even put off his expedition against the Marcomannians, for the purpose of celebrating the religious solemnities by which, he hoped, the evil

\* L. I. c. 17.

† L. XI. c. 18.

‡ L. I. c. 17.

might be averted.\* The multitude of victims which, in the preparation for that war, he caused to be sacrificed, provoked ridicule even from many of the pagans.†

It is then easily explicable that an emperor, with the love of justice and the gentleness which are set forth in the actions and writings of Marcus Aurelius, did nevertheless, from political and religious motives, become a persecutor of the Christians. We have a law of his which condemns to banishment to some island those “that do anything whereby men’s excitable minds are alarmed by a superstitious fear of the deity.”‡ That this law was pointed at the Christians cannot, indeed, be *asserted*; inasmuch as there were, in this reign, an unusual number of magicians and popular impostors, whose practices might have called forth such a law. But it may easily be conceived that Marcus Aurelius, like Celsus, who wrote at that time against the Christians, would not scruple to place the latter in the same class with the former. This prince was inclined to pardon such as confessed their crimes and showed signs of penitence, even in cases where he could have punished without being severe.§ But the Christians could not be induced to acknowledge they had done wrong; they rather persisted in that which was forbidden by the laws. It was, perhaps, for this reason that the emperor ordered that every means should be employed to drive them to a renunciation of their faith; and that the punishment of death should be inflicted only in the last extremity, when they could not be forced to submit. But an ill-advised humanity, aiming to spare the effusion of human blood, might easily become the occasion of much cruelty.

If now we put together all that is most peculiar in the character of the persecutions of this time, we find two things particularly worthy of notice: *first*, that *search* was made for the Christians, by express command; although, indeed, such search was often anticipated by the popular fury. We have seen above that, according to Trajan’s rescript, the Christians

\* Jul. Capitol. c. 13 et 21.

† Hence the epigram, οἱ λευκοὶ βόες Μάρκῳ τῷ Καίσαρι; ἂν σὺ νικήσῃς, ἡμῶς ἀπωλόμεθα. Ammian. Marcellin. l. XXV. c. 4.

‡ Relegendum ad insulam qui aliquid fecerit, quo leves hominum animi superstitione numinis terreantur, in the Pandects.

§ See the example in Capitolinus, cap. 13.



had been expressly distinguished from those criminals for whom it was the duty of the provincial authorities to make search. Now, on the contrary, diligent search was made for them; and to save their lives they were often obliged to conceal themselves, as appears both from several accounts of the persecutions, and from the assertions of Celsus.\* In the *second* place, the practice hitherto had been this: *when the Christians were accused, if, after repeated summons, they persisted in refusing to deny their faith, then they were executed without torture.* Now it was attempted to force them to recant by the use of torture. An edict, which agrees in all respects with this practice, is still extant, under the name of the Emperor *Aurelian*;† and as in style and matter it bears every mark of authenticity, may, doubtless, be the edict against the Christians, originally addressed by this emperor (*Aurelius*) to the presidents of the provinces. It runs thus:—“We have heard that the laws are violated by those who in our times call themselves Christians. Let them be arrested; and unless they offer to the gods, let them be punished with divers tortures; yet so that justice may be mingled with severity, and that the punishment may cease as soon as the end is gained of extirpating the crime.” The last clause is altogether in the character of *Marcus Aurelius*. The governors were to keep steadily in view the one object, which was to put down Christianity, as being at variance with the religion of the state, and to bring men back to the worship of the Roman gods. The magistrates were charged, indeed, not to act on the promptings of blind passion; but such a caution was plainly insufficient to restrain them from cruel and arbitrary measures. ‡

\* Celsus, speaking of the Christians, that not without reason they do everything in concealment: “Ἀπὶ διαδούμενοι τὴν ἱεροτημένην αὐτοῖς δίκην τοῦ θανάτου. L. I. c. 1. Ἦτοι φύγοντες καὶ κρυπτόμενοι ἢ ἀλισχόμενοι καὶ ἀπολλύμενοι. L. VIII. c. 41. Ὑμῶν δὲ καὶ πλανᾶται τις ἔτι λανθάνων, ἀλλὰ ζῆταιται πρὸς θανάτου δίκην. L. VIII. c. 69.

† A name which, as Pagi and Ruinart justly conjectured, probably stands for *Aurelius*.

‡ The edict, which is preserved in the *actis Symphoriani*, of which we shall hereafter have to speak, runs in the original as follows:—“*Aurelianus Imperator omnibus administratoribus suis atque rectoribus. Comperimus ab his, qui se temporibus nostris Christianos dicunt, legum præcepta violari. Hos comprehensos, nisi diis nostris sacrificaverint, diversis punite cruciatibus, quatenus habeat districtio prolata iustitiam et*

We proceed now, under the guidance of authentic records, to take a nearer view of the progress of these persecutions in the provinces, and of the behaviour of the Christians under them.

Accordingly we have to notice in the first place the troubles of the church of Smyrna in 167, in which the aged and venerable Bishop Polycarp, a disciple of the Apostle John, met his death. Of this persecution we have a detailed account in a circular letter addressed by the church of Smyrna to other Christian churches.\* The proconsul of Asia Minor, at that time, does not appear to have been personally hostile to the Christians; but the heathen populace, with whom the Jewish rabble had united themselves, raged violently against them. The proconsul yielded to the popular violence and to the law. By threats, by a display of the instruments of torture and of the savage animals to which they were to be thrown, did he

in *resecandis criminibus ultio terminata jam finem.*" Certainly no unprejudiced person can suppose this edict to be spurious, as there was no imaginable end to be gained by such a forgery, as it breathes the very spirit of pagan statesmen, and is expressed in the official language of the times. If it belonged to the age of Aurelian, whose name it bears, the martyr in whose history it stands must have perished in that reign. But it is difficult to believe that the persecution under this emperor proceeded so far as to the effusion of Christian blood (see below). The manner, too, in which the Christians are spoken of, as a sect by no means old, suits the time of M. Aurelius better than that of Aurelian, when the Christian sect had so long openly existed. The charge brought against the Christians, that by the exercise of their religion they violated the laws of the empire, would hardly have been made in the time of Aurelian, since Christianity had already at that time been for fifteen years admitted into the class of "*religiones licitæ*." No doubt, therefore, Aurelius, instead of Aurelianus, is the proper reading, such names being frequently confounded with each other. But Lucius Aurelius Commodus is out of the question, since he was well disposed towards the Christians. It can therefore only be M. Aurelius Antoninus. What Gieseler, in the second vol. of his Church History (2te Auflage, S. 134), has advanced against this hypothesis, is not sufficient, to say the least, to invalidate the above reasoning. The language of the concluding clause is, it is true, somewhat singular for the age of the Antonines; yet I can find nothing in it which is absolutely foreign to the Latinity of that age; and it is by no means clear to me that the Emperor M. Aurelius would not have employed the words *rectores* (*rector provinciæ*, see Tacit. Annal. l. II. c. 4), and *administratores* to designate the various governors.

\* By portions in Euseb. l. IV. c. 15. More complete in the collections of the *Patres Apostolici*.



endeavour to move the Christians to deny their faith; if they remained steadfast in the Lord, he condemned them to death. In one respect he certainly evinced too ready a compliance with the rage and cruelty of the people. He chose the most painful and ignominious deaths; such as throwing the Christians to wild beasts or burning them to death at the stake—punishments which he was not compelled to resort to by the laws. But on the other hand it must be allowed that, as the laws denounced death in general terms as the penalty for perseverance in Christianity, it would to a Roman mind appear right to assume that such as were not Roman citizens ought to suffer a more painful death than those who were.\*

Under the severest tortures, which excited pity even from the pagan bystanders, the Christians displayed great tranquillity and composure. "They made it evident to us all," says the church, "that in the midst of those sufferings they were absent from the body; or rather, that the Lord stood by them and walked in the midst of them; and, staying themselves on the grace of Christ, they despised the torments of the world." But even here the difference was shown betwixt the momentary intoxication of enthusiasm, which, though it courts danger with a rash self-confidence, turns to cowardice in the prospect of death, and that calm, deliberate submission to God's will which abides His call. A certain Phrygian, Quintus by name, of a nation peculiarly inclined to fanatical extravagance, went, of his own accord, in company with many others, whom by his discourses he had worked up to the same pitch of enthusiastic zeal, before the proconsul's tribunal, and declared himself a Christian. But when the magistrate pressed him, and wrought upon his fears by showing him the wild beasts, he yielded, swore by the genius of the emperor, and sacrificed. After stating this fact, the church adds, "We therefore praise not those who voluntarily surrender themselves, for we are not

\* To many of the crimes charged on the Christians by blind popular rumours, *such* capital punishments were assigned. Qui sacra impia nocturnave, ut quem obcantarent, fecerint faciendave curaverint, aut cruci suffiguntur. aut bestiis objiciuntur. Qui hominem immolaverint, sive ejus sanguine litaverint, fanum, templumve polluerint, bestiis objiciuntur, vel si honestiores sint, capite puniuntur. Magicæ artis conscios summo supplicio affici placuit, id est, bestiis objici aut cruci suffigi, ipsi autem magi vivi exuruntur. Julius Paulus in sententiis receptis.

so taught in the gospel." \* Very different was the behaviour of the venerable Bishop Polycarp, now ninety years of age. When he heard the shouts of the people demanding his death, it was his intention, at first, to remain quietly in the city, and await the issue which God might ordain for him; but the prayers of the church prevailed on him to take refuge in a neighbouring villa. Here he spent the time, with a few friends, occupied, as was his custom, day and night, in praying for all the churches throughout the world. When search was made for him, he retired to another villa. But he had scarcely reached it before the officers of the proconsul appeared, to whom his place of refuge had been betrayed by some who, unworthy of the honour, enjoyed his confidence. The bishop himself had again fled; but they found two slaves, and from one, whom they put to the torture, they extracted the secret of the bishop's hiding-place. As they were approaching, Polycarp, who was in the highest story of the dwelling, might have escaped by the flat roof to another house—a mode of flight made easy by the peculiar style of oriental building; but he said, "The will of the Lord be done." Coming down to the officers of justice, he ordered whatever they chose to eat and drink to be placed before them, requesting only that they would indulge him with one hour for quiet prayer. But the fullness of his heart carried him through two hours, so that the pagans themselves were touched by his devotion.

The time being now come for their departure, they conveyed him to the city on an ass, where they were met by the chief officer of the police (εἰρηνάρχος), coming, with his father, from the town. He took up Polycarp into his chariot, and, addressing him kindly, asked "what harm there could be in saying '*the emperor, our Lord*,' and in sacrificing." At first Polycarp was silent; but as they went on to urge him, he said mildly, "I will not do as you advise me." When they perceived they could not persuade him, they grew angry. With opprobrious language they thrust him out of the carriage so violently as to injure a bone of one of his legs. Without looking round, he proceeded on his way, cheerful and composed, as though nothing had happened. When he appeared before the pro-

\* Διὰ τοῦτο οὐκ ἱπαινόμεν τοὺς προσκύντας ἑαυτοῖς, (where, if it is not bad Greek, the reading should be ἰκύντας,) ἱπιδῇ οὐχ οὕτως διδάσκει τὸ εὐαγγέλιον.



consul, the latter urged him to have respect at least to his own old age, to swear by the genius of the emperor, and give proof of his penitence by joining in the shouts of the people, "Away with the godless!" Polycarp looked with a firm eye at the assembled crowd; then with a sigh, and his eyes uplifted to heaven, he said, pointing to them with his finger, "Away with the godless!" But when the proconsul urged him farther, "Swear, curse Christ, and I release thee;" "Eighty-and-six years," he replied, "have I served Him, and he has done me nothing but good—and how could I curse him, my Lord and Saviour?" When the proconsul continued to press him, "Well," said Polycarp, "if you wish to know what I am, I tell you frankly I am a Christian. Would you know what the doctrine of Christianity is, appoint an hour and hear me." The proconsul here, showing how far he was from sharing in the fanatical spirit of the people, and how gladly he would have saved the old man, if he could have appeased the multitude, said, "Do but persuade the people." Polycarp replied, "To you I felt myself bound to give account, for our religion teaches us to pay due honour to the powers ordained of God, so far as it can be done without prejudice to our salvation. But those I hold to be unworthy of my defending myself before them." The proconsul, having once more, but to no purpose, threatened him with the wild beasts and the stake, caused the herald to proclaim in the circus, "Polycarp has confessed himself a Christian!" These words contained, at the same time, the sentence of death. The heathen populace, with an infuriate shout, replied, "This is the teacher of atheism, the father of the Christians, the enemy of our gods, who teaches so many to turn from the worship of the gods and not to sacrifice." The proconsul having yielded to the demands of the people, that Polycarp should die at the stake, Jews and pagans hastened to bring wood from the workshops and the baths. As they were about to fasten him with nails to the stake of the pile, he said, "Leave me thus; He who has strengthened me to encounter the flames, will also enable me to stand firm at the stake." Before the fire was lighted, he prayed—"O! Lord, Almighty God, Father of thy beloved Son Jesus Christ, through whom we have received knowledge of thyself; God of the angels, and of the whole creation; of the human race, and of the saints that live in thy presence; I praise thee that thou

hast judged me worthy, this day and this hour, to take part among the number of thy Witnesses, in the cup of thy Christ."

What appeared to this church the greatest example in the death of Polycarp was not the mere martyrdom in itself, but the Christian manner in which it was endured. They expressed their conviction that all had been so ordered as that he should exhibit all the essential characters of evangelical martyrdom;\* "for," they write, "he waited to be delivered up" (did not, i. e., press forward uncalled to the martyr's death), "imitating, in this respect, our Lord, and leaving an example for us to follow; so that we should not look to that alone which may conduce to our own salvation, but also to that which may be serviceable to our neighbour. For this is the nature of true and genuine charity—to seek not merely our own salvation, but the salvation of all the brethren."†

The death of their pious pastor contributed also to the temporal advantage of his flock. The rage of fanaticism, after having obtained this victim, cooled down; and the proconsul, who was no personal enemy of the Christians, suspended all further search, and was willing to be ignorant that another Christian existed.

The second persecution under this emperor's reign, of which we have any account, fell upon the churches of Lyons (Lugdunum) and of Vienne, in the year 177, and the document from which we derive our more exact knowledge of its details is the letter addressed by these churches to those of Asia Minor.‡ The fanatical excitement of the populace in these cities equalled if it did not exceed that at Smyrna; but in addition to this, the superior magistrates seem to have been infected with the phrensy of the multitude. The outbursts of popular fury had gradually increased in violence; the Christians were insulted and abused whenever they appeared abroad, and were plundered in their own houses. At length the best known were seized and dragged before the magistrates. Having avowed themselves Christians, they were

\* Σχεδὸν γὰρ πάντα τὰ πράγοντα ἐγένετο, ἵνα ἡμῖν ὁ κύριος ἄνωθεν ἐπιδείξῃ τὸ κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον μαρτύριον.

† Περιέμενεν γὰρ, ἵνα παραδοθῇ, ὡς καὶ ὁ κύριος, ἵνα μιμηταὶ καὶ ἡμεῖς αὐτοῦ γενώμεθα, μὴ μόνον σκοποῦντες τὸ κατ' ἑαυτοῦς, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ κατὰ τοὺς πέλας, ἀγάπης γὰρ ἀληθοῦς καὶ βεβαίας ἐστὶν μὴ μόνον ἑαυτὸν διλιν σῶζεσθαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ πάντας τοὺς ἀδελφούς.

‡ Euseb. l. V. c. 1.



thrown into prison; for, since the governor or legate was absent, they could not be brought at once to trial. The legate, on his arrival, immediately began the examination with torture, not only in the hope of forcing the Christians to abjure, but also of wringing from them a confession of the truth respecting those absurd stories of unnatural crimes of which they were so generally accused. A young man, Vettius Epagathus, though a Christian belonging to the higher ranks (the ἐπισήμοις, or personis insignibus), on learning that such charges were laid against his brethren, felt constrained to present himself to the legate's tribunal as a witness of their innocence. He demanded a hearing, in order to show that nothing of a criminal nature was transacted in the Christian assemblies. The legate, however, refused to hear him, only asking him if he, too, were a Christian. When he distinctly admitted that he was, he was imprisoned with the rest, as the Christians' advocate (παράκλητος χριστιανῶν). Although by an ancient law\* the testimony of slaves against their masters was inadmissible in criminal causes—a law,† it must be owned, often violated in the arbitrary proceedings of the times of the empire‡—yet fanaticism refused to be bound by the regular forms of justice. The testimony of slaves was welcome, if it would serve to establish the incredible charges laid to the account of the Christians. The torture must be applied to pagan slaves, and terror extorted from them whatever they were required to say,—that those abominations, of which blind rumour accused the Christians, were practised by their masters. Men now believed they were justified in indulging in every species and form of cruelty. Neither kindred, age, nor sex was spared. The firmness and serenity of many Christians, under torture the most refined, showed, to use the words of the churches in their report of these proceedings, “how they were bedewed and strengthened by the spring of living water that flows from the heart of Christ; that nothing can be dreadful

\* Vetere senatusconsulto quæstio in caput Domini prohibebatur. Tacit. Annal. l. II. c. 30.

† Even Pliny seems to have paid no attention to this law in conducting his investigations against the Christians.

‡ When Tiberius first indulged in this practice, he was in the habit, before he put the quæstio per tormenta, of giving the slaves their freedom, so as to observe the law in appearance,—callidus et novi juris repertor, as Tacitus calls him for this reason.

where the love of the Father dwells; nothing painful where the glory of Christ prevails." Pothinus, the bishop of the church, a man of ninety years, infirm with old age and sickness, but inspired with the vigour of youth by his zeal to bear witness of the truth, was dragged before the tribunal. The legate asked him, "Who is the God of the Christians?" He answered, "You shall come to the knowledge of Him when you show yourself worthy of it." All who stood around the tribunal vied with each other in venting their rage on the venerable old man. Scarcely breathing, he was cast into a dungeon, where he died within two days. Even those who yielded and recanted gained nothing by their weakness. They were still cast into prison, not, indeed, as Christians, but as guilty of those crimes which were laid to the charge of the Christians; and, to justify this proceeding, advantage was doubtless taken of the fact, that several, under the pains of torture, had acknowledged guilt. Numbers perished in the gloomy prisons, where many means were devised to add to their terrors, and even hunger and thirst employed to aggravate the sufferings of these imprisoned confessors. On the other hand, to use the language of the church, "many, who had endured so severe torments that it seemed impossible for them to be restored by the most careful assiduities, lived on in their dungeons, destitute indeed of human aid, but so strengthened and refreshed in soul and body by the Lord, that they were able to encourage and comfort the rest. It happened, 'by the grace of God, who wills not the death of the sinner, but has joy in his repentance,' that the exhortations of these heroes of the faith had a powerful effect on many who had been induced to deny their faith, and the church, their mother, had the great joy of receiving once more alive from the prison those whom she had cast forth as dead."

As the number of the prisoners was considerable, and included several Roman citizens, who could not be tried in the province, the legate thought it best, with regard to them all, to send a report to Rome, and wait till the emperor's answer should have determined their fate. The imperial rescript decided that all who recanted should be set free, but the rest beheaded. In this case it is evident that Marcus Aurelius had the same views as Trajan, and was far from giving credit to the current charges laid against the Christians.



The legate immediately summoned before his tribunal all who, in the previous examinations, had been brought to abjure their faith, and were awaiting their fate in prison. Nothing else was expected than that they would stand by their formal recantation, and thus obtain deliverance. Great, therefore, were the rage and consternation of the multitude at seeing many of them now stand forth and maintain a steadfast confession, thus passing sentence of death on themselves. Those alone, in the language of the church, remained without, who possessed none of the marks of faith, no anticipation of the Lord's bridal garment, no idea of the fear of God, but had already, by their conduct, dishonoured the way of truth. Such of the prisoners as possessed the rights of Roman citizenship were ordered to be executed with the sword; although, to gratify the fury of the populace, the legate, in violation of the laws, caused one, Attalus, to undergo a variety of tortures, and at last to be thrown to the wild beasts; and it was only when he had survived all these that the sword of mercy was allowed to put an end to his sufferings. The rest were thrown to wild beasts. Two of these,—Ponticus, a youth of fifteen, and a girl, Blandina,—whom they endeavoured first of all to intimidate by making them witness the sufferings of their companions, and then to shake from their constancy by exhausting upon them all the arts of torture, excited universal astonishment at what God's power could effect in such weak and tender vessels. Although the intoxication of enthusiasm, suppressing the natural feelings, is capable of producing the most extraordinary phenomena, yet the enthusiasm of these martyrs was distinguished by those true marks, a sobriety and a humility arising from a sense of weakness, and by love and gentleness. They declined the honours which the Christians were eager to bestow on them. Even when they were led back to prison, after having repeatedly undergone the most exquisite tortures, still they were by no means confident of victory, foreseeing well the struggle between the flesh and the spirit. They earnestly rebuked all such as dignified them with the name of "martyrs." "This name," said they, "properly belongs only to the true and faithful Witness,\* the First Born of the dead, the Prince of life; or, at least, only to those martyrs whose testimony Christ has sealed by their constancy to the end. We are but

\* *Μάρτυρ*, Revel. 1, 5.

poor, humble *confessors*." With tears they besought the brethren fervently to pray for them, that they might attain to the glorious consummation. They received with the kindest love such as had fallen from the faith who were made their companions in prison, praying, with many tears, that the Lord would once more restore these dead ones to life. Even their persecutors were never mentioned by them with resentment, but they prayed that God would forgive those who had subjected them to such cruel sufferings. They left as a legacy to their brethren, not strife and war, but joy and peace, harmony and love.

To the mutilation even and burning of the dead bodies the rage of the populace finally turned. The ashes, with all that the fire had left, were cast into the neighbouring Rhone, that not a remnant of these enemies of the gods might pollute the earth. Neither by money, nor by entreaties, could the Christians succeed in obtaining possession of those remains so dear to them, for the purpose of interment. The blinded pagans imagined they could, in this way, confound the hopes of the Christians. "We will now see," said they, "whether they will arise, and whether God can help them, and deliver them out of our hands." Yet so great was the number of the Christians, that even here men at last became weary of bloodshed, and a branch of the church survived this terrible persecution.

In places where there were but few Christians they could more easily remain concealed, and the popular rage was not excited against them. In such districts the governors did not think it necessary to set on foot any inquiries, except in particular cases, when individuals had become notorious as enemies of the State religion. A case of this sort occurred about this time, in the town of Autun,\* at no great distance from Lyons. No one in the place was thinking of a persecution against the Christians, who were few in numbers and little known, when an individual first drew upon himself the public attention. The noisy multitude were celebrating, with great display, a festival in honour of Cybele, whose worship, derived probably from Asia Minor by the same channel that Christianity afterwards arrived by, was held here in the highest repute. An image of Cybele, in one of the usual sacred cars, was carried round in procession, accompanied by a vast crowd of the people. All fell upon

\* Augustodunum, Ædua.



their knees but Symphorian, a young man of a respectable family and a Christian, who happened to be standing by, and thought that he could not conscientiously unite in the ceremony; and, most probably, when called upon to explain his conduct, took occasion to speak of the vanity of idol worship. As a violator of the public ceremony and a disturber of the peace, he was immediately seized and conducted before the governor, Heraclius, a man of consular dignity. The governor demanded of him, "Are you a Christian? As far as I can see, you have escaped our notice because so few of the followers of this sect happen to be among us." "I am a Christian," he replied; "I worship the true God, who reigns in heaven; but your idol I cannot worship; nay, if permitted, I will dash it in pieces, on my own responsibility." Upon this, the governor declared him guilty of a double crime,—against the *religion*, and against the *laws* of the State; and as Symphorian could be moved neither by threats nor by promises to abandon his faith, he was sentenced to be beheaded. As they led him to the execution, his mother cried out to him, "My son, my son, keep the living God in thy heart. Be steadfast. There is nothing fearful in that death which so surely conducts thee to life. Let thy heart be above, my son; look up to him who dwells in heaven. To-day thy life is not taken from thee, but raised to a better. By a blessed exchange, my son, thou art this day passing to the life of heaven." \*

If we may credit a report which since the beginning of the third century has been widely diffused among the Christians, the Emperor Marcus Aurelius was induced, by a wonderful event, to change the course of policy which he had previously adopted towards the Christians. During the war with the Marcommani and Quadi, in 174, he, with his army, was thrown into a situation of extreme peril. The burning sun shone full in the faces of his soldiers, who were suffering under the torture of intolerable thirst; and under these unfavourable

\* The narrative of the martyrdom of Symphorian is, in all essential particulars, so simple, is so perfectly free from the common exaggerations of later times, is so conformable to the circumstances of the period, that it is impossible to doubt that we have here a more than ordinarily genuine foundation, although, perhaps, in places, the account is rhetorically overwrought. But all the particulars go to show that the event took place very near to the time of the persecution at Lyons and Vienne.

circumstances they were threatened with an attack of the enemy. In this extremity, the twelfth legion, composed entirely of Christians, fell upon their knees. Their prayer was followed by a shower of rain, which allayed the thirst of the Roman soldiers, and by a storm, which frightened the barbarians. The Roman army obtained the victory, and the emperor, in commemoration of the event, gave those Christian soldiers the name of the "thundering legion." He ceased to persecute the Christians; and though he did not go so far as to receive Christianity into the class of "lawful religions," yet he published an edict which threatened with severe penalties such as accused the Christians merely on the score of their religion.\*

In this account truth and falsehood are mixed together. In the first place, it cannot be true that the emperor was led to put a stop to the persecution of the Christians by any event of this date; for the bloody persecution at Lyons did not take place till three years later. Again, the "thundering legion," or "the twelfth of the Roman legions," had borne this name from the time of the Emperor Augustus.† The fundamental fact that the Roman army was, about that time, rescued from imminent danger by some such remarkable providence, is undeniable. The heathen themselves acknowledged it to be the work of Heaven; they ascribed it, however, not to the God of the Christians, nor to their prayers, but to their own gods, to their Jupiter, and to the prayers of the emperor, or of the pagan army; to say nothing of the blind superstition which attributed the storm to the incantations of an Egyptian magician.‡ The emperor, it is said, stretched forth his hands, in supplication to Jupiter, with the words, "This hand, which has never yet shed human blood, I raise to thee." There were paintings, in which he was represented in the attitude of prayer, and the army catching the rain in their helmets.§ The

\* Tertullian. *Apologet.* c. 5; ad Scapulam, c. 4. Euseb. l. V. c. 5.

† Dio Cassius, in his catalogue of the legions existing from the time of this emperor, mentions (l. LV. c. 23), τὸ δωδέκατον (στρατόπιδον) τὸ ἐν Καππαδοκίᾳ, τὸ κεραυνόφορον. As late as the fifth century we find mention in the *Notitia dignitatum imperii Romani*, sect. 27, of the *præfectura legionis duodecimæ fulminæ Melitenæ*, under the *dux Armeniæ*. The province of Melitene was on the borders of Armenia, towards Cappadocia.

‡ Dio Cass. l. LXXI. s. 8.

§ Themist. *orat.* 15: Τίς ἡ βασιλικωτάτη τῶν ἀρετῶν.



emperor has expressed his own conviction of the matter upon a medal, where Jupiter is exhibited launching his bolts on the barbarians, who lie stretched upon the ground;\* and perhaps, also, at the close of the first Book of his Monologues, where, among the things for which he was indebted, not to himself, but to the gods and his good fortune, he mentions what had happened to him among the Quadi.† It is certain, therefore, that this remarkable event can have had no influence in changing the disposition of the emperor towards the Christians. But it by no means follows that the latter are to be charged with having made up a false story. The matter easily admits of explanation. It is not impossible that, in the thundering legion, there were Christians—perhaps a large number of them; for it is certain that it was only *a party* among the Christians that condemned the military profession. And although it was difficult for Christians, at all times, and especially under an emperor so unfavourably disposed, while serving with the Roman army, to avoid participating in the rites of paganism, yet, under particular circumstances, they might succeed in so doing. The Christian soldiers, then, in this emergency, resorted to prayer, as they were ever wont to do on like occasions. The deliverance which ensued they regarded as an answer to their prayers; and, on their return home, they mentioned it to their brethren in the faith. These, naturally, would not fail to remind the heathen how greatly indebted they were to the people whom they so violently persecuted. Claudius Apollinaris, Bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia, might have heard the story, soon after the event itself, from the Christian soldiers belonging to this legion, which had returned to its winter quarters in Cappadocia; and by him it was introduced, either into an apology addressed to this emperor, or in some other apologetical work.‡ Tertullian, it is true, appeals

\* In Eckhel numism. III. 64.

† Τα ἐν Κουάδοις πρὸς τῶν γερμανῶν. Some suppose, it is true, that M. Aurelius here simply designates the place where this was written. But as a notice of this sort occurs nowhere else except in the third book, these words might rather refer, perhaps, to *events in certain places*, the remembrance of which was associated with the preceding meditations.

‡ Where Eusebius represents Apollinaris as affirming that the legion received the name *fulminea* from this event, the suspicion naturally arises that he read too hastily; since it is difficult to suppose that a contemporary, who lived in the vicinity of the winter quarters of that

to a letter of the emperor, addressed probably to the Roman Senate, in which he owns that the deliverance was due to the Christian soldiers. But this letter, if it contained in so many words an avowal of this kind, must, as is evident from our previous remarks, have been either spurious or interpolated. It may be a question, however, whether the letter contained any distinct affirmation of this sort: the emperor may simply have spoken of *soldiers*, and Tertullian explained it, according to *his own* belief, of *Christian* soldiers. He expresses himself, at any rate, with some degree of hesitation.\* That the Christians might possibly sometimes give to the religious declarations of the heathens an interpretation conformable to the principles of their own faith, is shown by another account of this event, which we find in Tertullian. It is in these words: "Marcus Aurelius, in the German expedition also, obtained, through the prayers offered to God by Christian soldiers, showers of rain during that time of thirst. When has not the land been delivered from drought by our supplications and fasts? † In such cases the very people gave our God the glory, for it was the God of gods, who alone is mighty, that they cried to under the name of Jupiter."

It is the less necessary to search after a cause for the cessation of the persecution, since it not only belongs to the nature of the passion that rage will finally expend itself, but it is also true, in the present case, that, within only a few years of the last bloody persecution in France, the government passed into different hands, and thus brought about an entire change of measures. The contemptible Commodus, who succeeded to his father A.D. 180, was overruled to minister to the interests of Christianity by securing to it a season of respite and tranquillity, after the long sufferings of its professors under M. Aurelius. For it cannot be supposed that a man like Commodus was capable of appreciating, in the slightest degree, its

legion, could have committed so gross a mistake. Perhaps Apollinaris merely said the emperor might now rightly call the legion by the name *fulminea*, or something of that sort. There is no difficulty in supposing that some such expression lay at the foundation of Eusebius' words, I. V. c. 5. Ἐξ ἐκείνου τὴν δι' εὐχῆς τὸ παράδοξον πεποιηκυῖαν λεγιῶνα οἰκίαν τῷ γεγονότι πρὸς τοῦ βασιλέως εἰληφῆναι προσηγορίαν.

\* *Christianorum forte militum.*

† Days of prayer and fasting were commonly united by the Christians.



worth. A certain Marcia,\* who lived with him in an illicit intercourse, was, for some unknown reason, friendly to the Christians, and influenced the brutal emperor in their favour. It is not impossible that the indulgent law which we recently cited from Tertullian proceeded from this sovereign (who was disposed to befriend the Christians) and has been wrongly transferred to the last years of his predecessor. Under the reign of this emperor, events do occur in which it has been supposed that the working of such a law may be traced. Still it may be a question whether it be not a hasty conclusion to infer from such events the existence of the law, whether the inference did not arise out of a misconception. At all events, it seems quite improbable that accusations against Christians would continue to be received—that Christians, when accused, would be condemned to death under the edict of Trajan—when their accusers were at the same time capitally punished! An example will, perhaps, set the whole matter in its true light.† Apollonius, a Roman senator, was accused before the city præfect of being a Christian. His accuser was immediately sentenced to death, and executed. But Apollonius, who boldly confessed his faith before the senate, was also, by a decree of that body, beheaded. Now Jerome, who, in this case, would hardly be misled by a wrong interpretation of Eusebius, but spoke rather from a correct

\* Ἱστορεῖται δὲ αὕτη πολλά τε ὑπὲρ τῶν Χριστιανῶν σπουδάζειν καὶ πολλὰ αὐτοῦ ἐνηργετηκέναι, ὅτε καὶ παρὰ τῷ Κοιμῶδι πᾶν δυναμένη. Dio Cass. l. LXXII. c. 4.

† We must allow that this matter gives rise to many doubts. We must assent to the remark of Gieseler, so far as this, viz. that, of course, either accusations proceeding from slaves against their masters were not received at all, or, if they were received, the person whom they concerned might be punished as a criminal. Now Jerome (De v. i. c. 42) does not, indeed, say that the slave was executed. The account in Eusebius (l. V. c. 21) might be one, then, mixed up with false reports, relating, as it did, to an event in the West. He may have been deceived by Greek *acta martyris*, in which the false story of the condemnation of this slave had been fabricated out of the rumour of the law above mentioned against accusers of Christians. On the other side, the following considerations should be duly weighed. The narrative of Jerome, in conformity with its purpose, may have been incomplete, and therefore may furnish no evidence against the truth of what Eusebius has added. We are not obliged to presuppose that the judges, especially where the question related to the death of a slave, acted in perfect consistency with justice.

knowledge of the facts, says that the accuser was a slave of Apollonius. And the ignominious character of his punishment, death by breaking the limbs, (the *suffringi crura*,) confirms this account. The accuser, then, as it would seem, was punished, not as the accuser of a Christian, but as a servant faithless to his master. From too broad a conclusion drawn from cases of this description, it is quite possible the above tradition with respect to a favourable law may have derived its origin.

Since this emperor, then, had probably made no change, by an express edict, in the situation of the Christians; since the old laws had never been distinctly repealed, but everything depended on the altered tone of the emperor himself; it follows, that the Christians must have been placed in very precarious circumstances. They were still as much exposed as they ever had been to be persecuted by individual governors, inimically disposed. Thus Arrius Montanus, proconsul of Asia Minor, began to wreak his vengeance on them; but a vast multitude of Christians immediately presented themselves before the tribunal, with a view to intimidate the proconsul by their numbers,—a proceeding which was not unlikely to be attended with the desired effect, under a government where the persecutions proceeded from the will of individuals, and not from the imperial throne. And, in fact, the proconsul was intimidated, and, contenting himself with condemning a few to death, he said to the rest,\* “Miserable beings, if you want to die, you have precipices or ropes.”† Irenæus, who wrote under the reign of this emperor, remarks that Christians were to be found in the imperial court, that they partook of all the privileges of the Roman empire, and were suffered to go unmolested, by land or by sea, wherever they chose.‡ Yet

\* Tertullian. *ad Scapulam*, c. 5: Ὁ δειλός, εἰ θύλειται ἀποθνήσκειν, κρημνούς ἢ βράχους ἔχει.

† In the second century three proconsuls are known under this name: the Antoninus Pius, who was afterwards emperor; his grandfather; and a third under the Emperor Commodus. *Æl. Lamprid. vita Commodi*, c. 6 et 7. We naturally think of the one who was Tertullian's contemporary; for if he meant another, he would probably have given some intimation that he was speaking of an older man. This proconsul, as we learn from Lampridius, stood in high estimation with the people. Perhaps it was his eagerness to retain their goodwill that led him to persecute the Christians.

‡ *L. IV. c. Hæres. c. 30*: Hi, qui in regali aula sunt fideles.



the same Irenæus observes, that the church in all ages, not excepting his own, sends many martyrs to their heavenly Father.\* The apparent contradiction is at once removed by the previous remarks.

The political disorders which followed the assassination of Commodus, in A.D. 192; the civil wars betwixt Pescennius Niger from the East, Claudius Albinus from Gaul, and Septimius Severus in Rome, who finally obtained the sovereignty, like all other public calamities, could not but be attended with injurious effects on the situation of the Christians. Clement of Alexandria, who wrote soon after the death of Commodus, says, "Many martyrs are daily burned, crucified, or beheaded before our eyes."† When Septimius Severus obtained the victory, and found himself in secure possession of the sovereignty, he manifested, it is true, a favourable disposition towards the Christians; and Tertullian's account may doubtless be correct, that he was induced to this by an incident of a personal nature, having been restored to health by the skill of Proculus,‡ a Christian slave, whom

\* L. IV. c. 33, v. 9.

† L. II. stromat. p. 414.

‡ Thus we are informed by Tertullian, in his work addressed to Scapula, c. 4, Proculum Christianum, qui Torpacion cognominabatur, Euodiae procuratorem, qui eum per oleum aliquando curaverat, requisivit et in palatio suo habuit usque ad mortem ejus. In respect to the right understanding of these words, it may be disputed whether the term Euodiae (which moreover is written in different ways) is a proper name or not, and how the word procurator should be taken. It might mean "an overseer of the causeways;" yet probably it is a slave or freed man from the mansion of some Roman lady, who held under her the office of steward or bailiff. Through his connection with this noble lady, Septimius Severus, before he became emperor, may have come in contact with this man, and the latter may have offered his services to heal him in some sickness. The oil, in this case, has some connection probably with the charisma of healing, according to Mark 6, 13, and James 5, 14. The inadvertent and (where he had no particular interest in doubting) the credulous Tertullian, is, indeed, not a very weighty witness; but the circumstantiality with which he speaks of the matter, as one generally known, might point to something which had a true foundation. He appeals to the fact that Caracalla, the son of Severus, was very well acquainted with this Proculus; that Caracalla himself was lacte Christiano educatus, whether we are to understand by this that he had a Christian for his nurse, or that he had spent his childhood amidst Christians who were in the service of the imperial household. With this may be compared what Ælius Lampridius says in the Life of this emperor (c. 1), namely, that the playmates of Caracalla, when he was

he received into his family, and constantly retained by his side. He knew that men and women of the highest rank in Rome, senators and their wives, were Christians; and protected them from the popular indignation.\* But as the old laws still remained in force, violent persecutions might break out in particular provinces; and we know, from several of the works of Tertullian which were composed in these times, that one actually took place in proconsular Africa. The festivities in honour of the emperor, where the absence of the Christians excited public attention, might probably have given occasion to it.

If in this reign the law against "close associations" was renewed,† this circumstance must have operated, as under the government of Trajan, to the disadvantage of those whose union had not yet been declared to be a "collegium licitum." Finally, in the year 202, Severus passed a law which forbade, under severe penalties, conversion either to Judaism or to Christianity.‡ That he held it necessary to enact such a prohibition, which was in truth involved in the earlier laws, is of itself a proof that these laws had fallen into neglect. It may be a question too, how the matter of this law of Severus is to be interpreted. If the emperor forbade the change to Christianity, (*Christianos fieri*), merely in the sense in which he forbade the change to Judaism, (*Judæos fieri*), it would seem to be implied that he held it necessary only to *check* the *farther* inroads, as well of Christianity as of Judaism, but had no wish to disturb those who were already Christians in the

seven years old, had, contrary to his father's will, led him to embrace Judaism (*ob Judaicam religionem gravius verberatus*), and in connection with the last should be kept in mind what we quoted recently from Celsus, that Christianity was propagated among the children. But although Septimius Severus may have had Christians among the members of his household, yet it by no means follows that he was himself favourable either to Christianity or its followers.

\* Tertullian says of Septimius Severus (in the passage just referred to), *Clarissimas feminas et clarissimos viros sciens hujus sectæ esse, non modo non læsit, verum et testimonio exornavit et populo furenti in nos palam restitit.*

† As may be inferred from the fact that he issued a rescript directing that those "*qui illicitum collegium coisse dicantur*," should be accused before the *Præfectus urbi*. Vid. Digest. l. XII. tit. XII. l. 1. s. 14.

‡ *Ælii Spartiani Severus, c. 17: Judæos fieri sub gravi pœna vetuit. Item etiam de Christianis sanxit.*



practice of their religion ;—and such a tacit recognition of Christianity must certainly be regarded as an advantage gained by the Christian party in the empire. But, as may be inferred from what we have already said, the situation of the Christians in this case was quite different from that of the Jews. In the case of Judaism it was naturally assumed in the prohibition, *Judæos fieri*, that *the Jews, as a nation*, were to remain unmolested in their right to the free exercise of their own religion ; and by making it a criminal act, *Judæos fieri*, this law pronounced the criminality of all other Roman citizens who had already passed over to Judaism. But in the case of the Christians no such distinction as this could be made. So far, therefore, as it concerned them, the law would pronounce all to be criminal, *without exception*, who had ever become Christians. We ought, however, to have the words of the law before us, in order to be able to decide with any certainty as to its true meaning.

At all events, so explicit a declaration, coming from an emperor who had hitherto shown himself personally favourable to the Christians, could only operate to their disadvantage. In many districts the persecution was so fierce, that it was looked upon as a sign of the speedy appearance of the Antichrist.\* In Egypt and in proconsular Africa this seems to have been particularly the case. The persecution, however, was certainly not general.

At a somewhat earlier period the threat of lodging an information with the magistrates had frequently been employed to extort money from the Christians ; † and many had bargained at a certain price, with informers, or money-loving and corrupt officers, for the privilege of not being disturbed in the exercise of their religion. ‡ But as, throughout this reign, the laws against the Christians were neither strictly nor universally enforced, such proceedings became more common, doubtless, than in earlier persecutions. Whole communities

\* Euseb. l. VI. c. 7.

† The concutere Christianos.—Quid dicit ille concussor? Da mihi pecuniam, certe ne eum tradat. Tertullian. de fuga in persecutione, c. 12.

‡ Tu pacisceris cum delatore vel milite vel furunculo aliquo præside, sub tunica et sinu, quod aiunt, ut furtivo, quem coram toto mundo Christus emit, imo et manumisit, says the high-hearted Tertullian, as the opponent of such transactions. l. c.

now purchased freedom from disturbance in this way.\* Many bishops thought that by this course they best consulted the interest of their churches.† But such measures would naturally be opposed by such as cherished a fanatical longing after martyrdom, while many also condemned it on the score of prudence, and of zeal for the dignity and purity of the Christian name. On the score of prudence, because it was only possible to satisfy a few, while it would excite the more the rage and cupidity of others; ‡—on the score of interest for the honour and purity of the Christian name, because by this course Christians became associated with those who by bribes purchased immunity for unlawful pursuits or nefarious crimes. § When the advocates of this course pleaded in their defence that men ought to give to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's and to God the things that are God's, Tertullian replied thus: "He who would in this way extort money from me is plainly not demanding anything for the emperor, but is rather acting against him, since for the sake of gold he lets the Christians go free, who by the laws are liable to punishment."|| It appears to him remarkable, that, at a period when so many new regulations were devising for the improvement of the revenue, when so many new taxes were introduced, it had never occurred to any one to propose the free profession of Christianity at a certain rate fixed by law. By this means—so great, as all were aware, was the number of Christians—the public revenue might be greatly increased. ¶

\* *Parum est, si unus aut alius ita eruitur. Massaliter totæ ecclesiæ tributum sibi irrogaverunt. Tertullian. l. c. c. 13.*

† To this Tertullian sarcastically alludes:—*Ut regno suo securi frui possent, sub obtentu pacem procurandi.*

‡ *Neque enim statim et a populo eris tutus, si officia militaria redemeris, says Tertullian, l. c. c. 14.*

§ Tertullian says, with reference to this (l. c. c. 13), *Nescio dolendum an erubescendum sit, cum in matricibus beneficiariorum et curiosorum inter tabernarios et lanios et fures balnearum et aleones et lenones Christiani quoque vectigales continentur.*

|| *Miles me vel delator vel inimicus concutit, nihil Cæsari exigens; imo contra faciens, cum Christianum, legibus humanis reum, mercede dimittit. Tertullian. l. c. c. 12.*

¶ *Tanta quotidie ærario augendo prospiciuntur remedia censuum, vectigalium, collationum, stipendiorum, nec unquam usque adhuc ex Christianis tale aliquid prospectum est, sub aliquam redemptionem capitis et sectæ redigendis, cum tantæ multitudinis nemini ignotæ fructus ingens meti posset. L. c. c. 12.*



The situation of the Christians continued to be the same under the government of the insane Caracalla, although the cruel emperor did not himself set on foot any new persecutions. Everything depended on the individual temper of the different governors. Many of them were active in devising expedients for saving, without open violation of the laws, the lives of those Christians who were arraigned before them.\* Others were furious, either from personal hatred, or from a wish to flatter the people. Others, again, were contented to proceed according to the letter of the law enacted by Trajan. Tertullian, in a letter to one of the persecutors of the Christians, the proconsul Scapula, remarks, that if he would use the sword *against the Christians only according to the original laws*, and as was still done by the governor of Mauritania, and by the governor of Leon, in Spain, he might discharge every lawful duty of his office without resorting to cruelty. Trajan's law then was not always the governing rule.

We will now adduce a few characteristic instances which will serve to illustrate the character of the persecutions of this time.† In the year 200, some Christians belonging to the city of Scillita, in Numidia, were brought before the tribunal of the proconsul Saturninus. He said to them, "You may obtain pardon of our emperors (Severus and Caracalla) if you will return in good earnest to our gods." One of them, Speratus, replied, "We have injured no man; we have

\* Tertullian relates that a præses even went so far as to furnish the Christians with the means of so answering the questions of the judge as to ensure their discharge. Another at once released a Christian who had been brought before him, declaring it contrary to the laws to yield to the demands of his fellow citizens,—i. e. if we take *tumultuosum* as neuter; or perhaps the correct reading may be, he discharged the individual as a factious person, who must settle the matter with his fellow-citizens; viz., do what would satisfy them,—*dimisit quasi tumultuosum, civibus suis satisfacere (ut—satisfaceret)*. A third subjected a Christian to slight torture, and, as he yielded at once, dismissed him without requiring anything more of him, at the same time expressing to the assistant judges his regret at having had anything to do with such business. Another tore in pieces the elogium or writ, when a Christian, seized by violence, was brought before him, declaring that *secundum mandatum*,—the law of Trajan,—he would listen to no complaint in the absence of the accusers. See Tertullian, *ad Scapulam*, c. 4.

† The documents from which we take them are in Ruinart, *Acta Martyrum*, the *Acta Martyrum Scillitanorum*, and *Acta Perpetuæ et Felicitatis*.

spoken ill of none ; for all the evil you have brought upon us we have only thanked you. We give praise for all his dispensations to our true Lord and King." The proconsul replied, " We also are pious ; we swear by the genius of the emperor our lord, and we pray for his welfare, as you also must do." On this Speratus observed, " I know of no genius of the ruler of this earth ; but I serve my God in heaven, whom no man hath seen nor can see. I have defrauded no man of his due. I have never failed to pay the custom upon all which I purchase, for I acknowledge the emperor as my ruler ; but I can *worship* none but my Lord, the King of kings, the Lord of all." Upon this the proconsul ordered the Christians to be conducted back to their prison until the next day. When they appeared again, he addressed them once more, and granted them a space of three days for deliberation. But Speratus answered in the name of the rest, " I am a Christian, and we *all* are Christians ; we will not depart from our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Do with us as you please." Having thus confessed themselves Christians, and refused to pay due honour to the emperor, they were condemned to be beheaded. On receiving their sentence they thanked God, and, as they came to the place of execution, they fell on their knees and again gave thanks.

Some few years afterwards three young men, Revocatus, Saturnius, and Secundulus, and two young women, Perpetua and Felicitas, were arrested at Carthage, all of them being still catechumens. The story of their imprisonment and sufferings presents many a beautiful trait of the power of Christian faith, combined with Christian tenderness of feeling. Perpetua, who was two-and-twenty years of age, who was a mother with an infant at the breast, had to struggle not only with the feelings of human nature, which instinctively shrinks from death, and with the weakness of her sex ; a harder conflict still remained for her with those pure human feelings, grounded in the best and most sacred of ties, and which Christianity recognises in all their strength, and even lends to them greater depth and tenderness, but at the same time demands to be sacrificed to the One paramount obligation. The mother of Perpetua was a Christian, but her aged father was still a pagan. The life of his daughter was dear to him, but still more than her loss he dreaded also the disgrace which her dying as a Chris-



tian would, he thought, bring upon him. When she was first brought to the tribunal, her aged father came and urged her to recant. Pointing to a vessel that lay on the ground, she said, "Can I call this vessel anything else than what it really is?" "No." "Neither then can I say but that I am a Christian." In the mean time she was baptized; for the clergy usually found no difficulty in purchasing, at least, from the overseers of the prisons, free access to the Christians in confinement, for the purpose of administering to them the offices of religion; although, in the present case, a bribe was perhaps unnecessary, since the prisoners were not as yet placed under a strict guard. Perpetua said, "The Spirit prompted me at my baptism to pray for nothing but patience." After a few days they were thrown into a dungeon. "I was tempted," she said, "for I had never been in such darkness before. O what a dreadful day! The excessive heat occasioned by the multitude of prisoners, the rough treatment we experienced from the soldiers, and finally anxiety for my child, made me miserable." The deacons who brought to them from the communion the consecrated elements in the dungeon, purchased for the Christian prisoners a better apartment, where they were separated from other criminals. Perpetua now took the child to herself in the dungeon, and placed it at her breast; she recommended it to her mother; she comforted her friends, and felt cheered herself by the possession of her babe. "The dungeon," said she, "became a palace to me."

The report reached her aged father that they were about to be tried. He hastened to her and said, "My daughter, pity my grey hairs, pity thy father if thou still thinkest me worthy to be called thy father. If I have brought thee up to the bloom of thy age, if I have preferred thee above all thy brothers, expose me not to such shame among men. Consider thy mother, consider thy aunt, consider thy son, who, if thou diest, cannot long survive. Lay aside that lofty spirit, lest thou plunge us all into ruin. For if thou diest thus, not one of us will ever be able to speak with the boldness of a free man." Whilst saying this, he kissed her hands, threw himself at her feet, with tears in his eyes, calling her not his daughter but his mistress. "My father's grey hairs," said the daughter, "pained me, when I thought that of all my family he alone would not rejoice in my sufferings." To his entreaties she

replied, "What will happen when I come before the tribunal depends on the will of God; for know, we stand not in our own strength, but by the power of God." When the decisive hour arrived, her aged father also appeared, to try, for the last time, to overcome his daughter's resolution. The governor said to Perpetua, "Take pity on thy father's grey hairs, pity thy helpless child. Offer sacrifice for the welfare of the emperor." She answered, "That I cannot do." "Art thou a Christian?" "Yes," she replied, "I am a Christian." Her fate was now decided. They were all condemned to be thrown to wild beasts at the approaching festival on the anniversary of the young Geta's accession,\* and so to furnish a cruel sport for the people and soldiers. They returned to the dungeon rejoicing. But Perpetua did not suppress the tender feelings of the mother. Her first act was to send a request to her aged father that she might have the child, that she might suckle it; but he refused to part with it. As to Felicitas, on her return to the dungeon she was seized with the pains of labour. The jailer said to her, "If thy present sufferings are so great, what wilt thou do when thou art thrown to the wild beasts? This thou didst not consider when thou refusedst to sacrifice." She answered, "What I *now* suffer, I suffer *myself*; but then there will be *another* who will suffer for *me*, because I also will suffer for him." A custom which had come down from the times of human sacrifices, under the bloody Baal-worship of the Carthaginians, still prevailed of dressing in priestly garments the criminals who were condemned to be thrown to the wild beasts. When therefore it was in the present case proposed to clothe the men as priests of Saturn, and the women as priestesses of Ceres, their free and Christian spirit nobly protested against such a proceeding. "We have come here," said they, "of our own will, that our freedom may not be taken from us. We have given up our lives, that we may not be forced to such abominations." The pagans themselves acknowledged the justice of their demand, and yielded.

When the martyrs, having been torn by the wild beasts, were about to receive the merciful stroke which was to end their sufferings, they exchanged for the last time the mutual kiss of Christian love.

Quieter times for the Christian Church began with the

\* Natales Cæsaris.



reign of the ignoble Heliogabalus, A.D. 219. We have already explained the singular phenomenon that the worst princes invariably proved the most favourably disposed towards the Christians. Heliogabalus was not a follower of the old religion of the state, but devoted to a foreign superstition, the Syrian worship of the Sun, with which the most abominable excesses were combined. This worship the emperor wished to make predominant throughout the Roman empire, and to blend all other religions into it. To this end he tolerated Christianity, as he did every other foreign form of worship. Had he ever proceeded to put his plan into execution he would assuredly have met with the most determined opposition from the Christians.\*

Very different motives were they that gave rise to the favourable disposition of the noble-minded and devout Alexander Severus (from the year 222 to 235), an emperor wholly unlike his abandoned predecessor. This excellent prince possessed a ready sympathy with all that is good, and a reverence for everything connected with religion. In religion he was a friend of the principle of eclecticism, whose grounds and origin we have already explained. But he was distinguished from others of the same principles, by giving a place in his system to Christianity. In Christ he recognised a Divine Being, equal with the other gods; and in the Lararium (the domestic chapel), where he offered his morning devotions, there stood, among the images of those men whom he regarded as beings of a superior order—of Apollonius of Tyana, of Orpheus—the bust also of Christ. It is said that it was his intention to cause Christ to be enrolled among the Roman deities. The emperor was constantly repeating the words of our Saviour—"As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise"—a maxim, however, which, taken alone, is, it must be confessed, but little suited to mark the distinguishing character of Christianity—and caused them also to be engraven on the walls of his palace and on public monuments. When Julia Mammæa, the mother of the emperor, and who possessed a great influence over him, resided at Antioch, she sent for Origen, the great teacher of the Alexandrian church; and we may be certain that this father, who, more than any other, knew how to make Christ-

\* *Æl. Lamprid. vit. c. 3, 6, 7.*

ianity intelligible to a foreign mode of thinking, availed himself of this opportunity to do this in the case of Mammæa. The declarations of this emperor on several occasions presuppose the recognition of Christianity as a “*religio licita*,” and of the Christian church as a lawfully existing corporation; as, for example, when, in recommending a new mode of appointment to the civil offices of the state, he referred for a model to the regulations in Christian churches; and when, in a dispute betwixt the guild of cooks and the Christian church in Rome, respecting a lot of common land which the latter had appropriated, he decided in favour of the church, saying, “It was better that God should be worshipped, in whatever manner, on that spot, than that it should be given up to the cooks.” With this favourable disposition on the part of Alexander Severus towards the Christians, and after his declarations, which implied a tacit recognition of Christianity as a “*religio licita*,” it is the more singular that he should still have omitted to take the decisive step which would have given to the Christian church the greatest, the most certain, and the most lasting advantage—that of admitting Christianity by an express law of the empire among the tolerated religions. This fact clearly proves how difficult it was for a Roman emperor to effect a change in anything that related to the public religion of the state. And it was even in the reign of Severus that Domitius Ulpian, the civilian whose authority stands so high in Roman law, collected, in the seventh of his ten books, *De officio proconsulis*,\* the rescripts of the emperors against the Christians.†

The rude Thracian, Maximinus, who in the year 235, after the murder of the excellent Alexander Severus, raised himself to the imperial throne, hated the Christians simply because of the friendship which his predecessor had shown them, and persecuted in particular those bishops who had been on terms of intimacy with him.‡ In addition to this, several of the provinces—Cappadocia, for instance, and Pontus—were visited with destructive earthquakes, which re-enchanted the

\* Of which the fragments are to be found in the Digests, l. I. tit. XIV. c. 4, and the following.

† Lactant. institut. l. V. c. 11 : *Ut doceret, quibus oportet eos pœnis affici, qui se cultores Dei confiterentur.*

‡ Euseb. l. VI. c. 28.



popular hatred against the Christians. Under such an emperor as Maximinus, the fury of the people had free scope ; and it was, moreover, encouraged by hostile governors. The persecutions were, indeed, confined to particular provinces, so that the Christians could save themselves by flying from one province to another. But although the persecutions were less violent than in other times, they made the greater impression, because they fell on those who, during the long interval of peace, had become unused to violence.\*

With the accession of Philip the Arabian, in the year 244, a more favourable time returned to the Christians. It is said that this emperor was himself a Christian.† We have a circumstantial account which states that on one Easter eve he presented himself at a Christian church for the purpose of joining in the public worship, but that he was met at the door by the bishop,‡ who told him that, on account of his past crimes,§ he could not be admitted until he had submitted to the penance of the church ; and that the emperor actually consented to comply with the terms prescribed. But this story does not harmonize with what we learn elsewhere of the emperor Philip. In no part of his public life, not even on his coins, has he left the least trace of his Christianity. On the contrary, he appears throughout an observer of the pagan rites of the state. Origen, who maintained a correspondence with the imperial family,|| and who, during this reign, wrote his work against Celsus, gives us, indeed, to understand that the Christians now enjoyed a period of repose. Still we do not find in him any intimation that the ruler of the Roman empire was a Christian, not even in passages where assuredly, if it had been true, he would have felt called upon to mention it. The only possible way of explaining this fact would be to suppose that the emperor, for political reasons, kept his conversion to

\* Vid. ep. Firmiliani Cæsareens. 75 apud Cypr. and Orig. Commentar. in Matth. T. III. p. 857. Ed. de la Rue.

† Eusebius, in his Church History, makes use of the expression *κατ' ἐχρησιν λόγος*. But in the Chronicle he distinctly calls him the first Christian emperor.

‡ According to the later tradition of Babylas, bishop of Antioch.

§ The assassination of his predecessor, Gordianus, was doubtless one of the crimes here meant.

|| He had written letters to the emperor and to his wife Severa, which have not been preserved.

Christianity a secret. But then, again, such a statement would be irreconcilable with the other, which makes him to visit a Christian assembly on so solemn an occasion, and to submit even to the penance of the church. We find, indeed, the first traces of the tradition of this emperor's conversion to Christianity in an author of no less credit than Dionysius of Alexandria, who wrote in the reign of Valerian, the second in succession from Philip. He says of Valerian, that "he showed more good will towards the Christians than even those emperors who were held to be Christians themselves."\* By *those emperors* we can conceive no others to be meant than the present Philip and Alexander Severus. Probably, then, the well-informed Dionysius placed both in the same class. Philip, like Alexander Severus, might have included Christianity in his system of religious eclecticism, and so legendary exaggeration made of him a Christian. But the assassination of his predecessor, and many other actions of which he was known to be guilty, were inconsistent with his Christianity: to solve, therefore, this contradiction, the legend may have thought it necessary to add this figment of the occurrence at the vigil of Easter.

But instead of dwelling longer upon this exaggerated story, we will now, before we pass to new trials of the Christian church, adduce the remarkable words of that great ecclesiastical teacher and writer of the times, Origen, with regard both to the trials which the church had already encountered, and also her existing condition and future prospects. Of the earlier persecutions he observes,† "Although the Christians, who had been commanded not to defend themselves against their enemies by outward force, observed the mild and humane injunction, yet that which they could not have gained, however powerful they might have been, had they been permitted to wage war, they have *received* from *God*, who constantly *fought for them*, and who, from time to time, constrained to peace *those* who had arrayed themselves against them, and would have exterminated them from the earth; for, as a kind of warning and memorial to them, that, when they saw some of their brethren exposed to sufferings on account of their religion, they might become the bolder in despising death, a few now and then, *so few* that they may easily *be numbered*,

\* Euseb. l. VII. c. 10.

† L. III. c. 8.



have died for the Christian religion;\* while God has always prevented a war of extermination against the whole body of Christians, since it was his pleasure that they should remain, and that the whole earth should be filled with this saving and most holy doctrine. And yet, on the other hand, in order that the weaker brethren, delivered from their fear of death, might breathe freely, God has taken care of the faithful, scattering, by his mere will, all the assaults of their enemies, so that neither emperor, nor governor, nor the populace, were allowed to rage against them any more." In reference to his own times, he observes, "The number of the Christians God has caused continually to increase, and some addition is made to it every day: he has, moreover, *already given them the free exercise of their religion*,† although a thousand obstacles still hinder the spread of the doctrine of Jesus in the world. But since it was God who willed that the doctrines of Jesus should become a blessing to the gentiles also, the machinations of men against the Christians have all been put to shame, and the more that emperors, governors, and the populace *endeavoured to destroy the Christians, the more powerful have they become*."‡ He also says that among the multitude who had become Christians there might be found men of wealth and of high stations in the government, as also rich and noble women;§ that the teacher of a Christian church might now, indeed, obtain honour and respect, and yet that the contempt with which he was treated by others exceeded the respect which he enjoyed from his brethren in the faith.|| He says, moreover, that these absurd accusations against the Christians were still believed by many, who carried their prejudices so far as even to avoid speaking with them.¶ By the divine will the persecutions against the Christians had long since ceased; but he adds, with a glance to the future, that this time of

\* Ὀλίγοι κατὰ καιροῦ; καὶ σφοδρὰ εὐαρίθυμοι ὑπὲρ τῆς Χριστιανῶν διανοηθείας τεθνήκασιν.

† Ἡδὲ καὶ παρρησίαν ἐπιδέδωκεν. L. VII. c. 26.

‡ Τοσούτων πλείους ἐγένοντο καὶ κατίσχυον σφοδρὰ. L. c.

§ Τινὲς τῶν ἐν ἀξιώμασι, καὶ λύναια τὰ ἄβωά καὶ εὐγενῆ. L. III. c. 9.

|| Καὶ νῦν δὲ πλείων ἐστὶν ἢ παρὰ τοῖς λοιποῖς ἀδοξία τῆς παρὰ τοῖς ὑποδύουσιν νομιζομένης δόξης καὶ οὐ πᾶσιν (an allusion to the parties existing among the Christians). L. c.

¶ L. VI. c. 28. Origen says that Jews had spread abroad those reports about the murder of children, &c., against the Christians.

tranquillity was likely soon to come to an end, since the calumniators of Christianity have once more started the opinion that the cause of the many disturbances (in the latter part of this emperor's reign) was to be ascribed to the great multitude of the Christians, who had so increased their numbers because they were no longer persecuted.\* He foresaw then the possibility of a revival of the troubles, that the persecutions had not yet come to an end, and that the opinion which saw in the decline of the state religion and the unceasing progress of Christianity the source of fresh calamities to the empire would sooner or later bring on another persecution. "If God," says he, "grants liberty to the tempter, and gives him the power to persecute us, we shall be persecuted. But if it is God's will that we should *not* be exposed to these sufferings, we shall, in some wonderful way, enjoy tranquillity, even in the midst of a world that hates us; and we trust in him who has said, Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. And, in truth, he has overcome the world. In so far, then, as it is the will of Him who has overcome the world, that we should overcome it, and as he has received from the Father power to overcome the world, we are confident in *his* victory.† But if it is his pleasure that we should again strive and battle for the faith, then let the enemy come, and we will say to him, 'We can do all things through him that strengthens us, Jesus Christ our Lord.'" Although Origen was too sensible and sagacious to place great confidence in the tranquillity which the church then enjoyed, and rather saw that new struggles were yet to be undergone, still he was firmly persuaded that the day was coming when Christianity, by virtue of its intrinsic, divine power, was to come forth victorious out of them all, and gain the dominion over the whole world. Celsus had said, that if all were to behave like the Christians the emperor would be left without an army, the Roman empire would fall a prey to the wildest barbarians, and

\* Καὶ εἰκὸς παύσεσθαι τὸ ὥς πρὸς τὸν βίον τοῦτον τοῖς πιστεύουσιν ἐγγινόμενον ἀδίκαις, ἐπὶ δὲ πάλιν οἱ παντὶ τρόπῳ διαβάλλοντες τὸν λόγον, τὴν αἰτίαν τὴν ἐπὶ τοσούτῳ νῦν στάσει ἐν πλῆθει τῶν πιστευόντων νομίσασιν εἶναι. L. III. c. 15.

† I render the passage (l. VIII. c. 70), according to what seems to me to be a necessary correction of the text: Διότι εἰς ὅσον νικῆσαι (instead of εἰς) ἡμεῖς (this I insert) αὐτὸν ὃ βούλεται, λαβὼν ἀπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς τοῦ νικᾶν τὸν κόσμον, ὃ ἐλείψαμεν (ὃ I omit) τῇ ἐκείνου νίκῃ.



consequently all civilization become extinct. To this Origen replied—"If, as Celsus says, all did as I do, then the barbarians also would receive the divine word, and become the most moral and gentle of men. All other religions would cease from the earth, and Christianity alone be supreme, *which indeed is destined one day to have the supremacy, since the divine truth is continually bringing more souls under its sway.*"\* The conviction which Origen here expresses—that Christianity, by its own intrinsic power, would, in addition to its other conquests, subdue all the rudeness of the savage stock of human nature, and bestow all true enlightenment on the barbarians—was nothing new, but had been given from the first with the Christian consciousness itself. The Apostle Paul describes Christianity as a power adapted as well to Scythians as to Greeks, and destined to impart the same divine life to both these national stocks, uniting them together in one divine family; and Justin Martyr assures us that no barbarian or nomadic race was to be found in which prayers were not offered to God in the name of the Crucified.† But the feature which, in Origen's assertion, is really new—that which evinces the change which, during the course of this century, the progress of history had worked in the mode of thinking among Christians, and in their anticipations of the future development of God's kingdom—was Origen's confident avowal of an expectation that Christianity, *working outwards from within*, would overcome and suppress every other religion, and gain the dominion of the world. Such an anticipation was foreign to the thoughts of the *earlier* teachers of the church. They could not think otherwise of the pagan state than as a power incessantly hostile to Christianity, and only expected the triumph of the church as the result of a supernatural interposition, at the second coming of Christ.‡

\* Δηλονότι καὶ οἱ βάρβαροι, τῷ λόγῳ τοῦ Θεοῦ προσελθόντες, νομιμάτῃ τοι ἔσονται, καὶ πᾶσα μὲν θρησκεία καταλυθήσεται, μόνῃ δὲ ἡ Χριστιανῶν κρατήσῃ· ἥτις καὶ μόνῃ ποτὲ κρατήσῃ, τοῦ λόγου ἁπλῆς νεομομένου ψυχᾶς. Ii. VIII. c. 68.

† Dial. c. Tryph. f. 345, ed. Colon: Οὐδὲ ἐν γὰρ ὅλῳ ἐστὶ τὸ γένος ἀνθρώπων, εἴτε βαρβάρων, εἴτε ἐλλήνων, εἴτε ἀπλῶς ὧτινι οὖν ὀνόματι προσεχγορευμένων ἢ Ἀμαζονιδῶν ἢ αἰσίων καλουμένων ἢ ἐν σκηναῖς κτηνοτρόφων οἰκούντων, ἐν οἷς μὴ διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος τοῦ σταυρωθέντος Ἰησοῦ εὐχαὶ καὶ εὐχαριστίαι τῷ πατρὶ καὶ ποιητῇ τῶν ὅλων γίνονται.

‡ This is expressed by Justin Martyr, in the Dial. c. Tryph. f. 358,

The prediction of the sagacious Origen, with regard to impending persecutions, was soon verified. Indeed, at the very time he was inditing these words at Cæsarea in Palestine, they were already being verified in another district of the empire. When the devoted adherents of the old national religion observed the encroachments which, threatening the destruction of all that they held most dear, had been everywhere made by Christianity during the long period of undisturbed tranquillity, their fanaticism was naturally excited to greater violence. And accordingly, even before the change in the government, an individual made his appearance in Alexandria, who imagined that he had been called by an express revelation\* to arouse the people to defend their ancient sanctuaries against the enemies of the gods; and by this means he kindled against the Christians the fury of the excitable populace of that city, from whom they had already suffered much.

It had often happened before now that a government favourable to the Christians was succeeded by one which oppressed them. The reign of Antoninus Pius, for example, had been followed by that of Marcus Aurelius—and of Marcus Aurelius by that of Maximinus the Thracian. So it proved once more, when, in 249, Decius Trajanus, after conquering Philip the Arabian, placed himself on the throne of the Cæsars. An emperor, zealously devoted to the pagan religion, upon succeeding to a government which had been lenient towards the Christians, would naturally feel himself called upon to enforce again the ancient laws, which had been allowed to fall into abeyance, and to carry them more rigorously into execution against the religion which, through the indulgence of the previous reign, had become widely diffused. In many parts of the empire the Christians had now been undisturbed for at least thirty years; in several districts for a still longer time. A persecution, following so long a period of tranquillity, could not fail to prove a sifting process for the churches, when so many had forgotten the conflict with the

where he says of the ἄρχοντες,—Οἱ οὐ παύσονται θανατοῦντες καὶ διωκοντες τοὺς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Χριστοῦ ὁμολογούντας, ἕως πάλιν παρῇ καὶ καταλύσῃ πάντας.

\* Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, in a letter to Fabius, bishop of Antioch, cited in Eusebius (l. VI. c. 41), calls him, ὁ κακῶν τῇ πόλει ταύτῃ μάντις καὶ ποιητής.



world to which as Christians they were called, and the virtues which they should maintain in this conflict. It was in this light, of a sifting and cleansing of the churches, which under the long enjoyment of peace had become worldly and slothful, that this new persecution was regarded by Cyprian, the bishop of Carthage. It was thus, therefore, that he expressed himself to the Christians under his spiritual guidance, soon after the first storm of the persecution was over.\* "If," said he, "the cause of the disease is understood, the remedy of the unsoundness is already found. The Lord would prove his people; and because the divinely prescribed rule of life had been disturbed in the long interval of tranquillity, a divine judgment was sent to revive our fallen, and, I might almost say, slumbering faith. Our sins deserve more; but our gracious Lord has so ordered it, that all which has occurred should appear rather like a trial than a persecution. Forgetting what believers did in the times of the apostles, and what they should always be doing, Christians have laboured, with insatiable desire, to increase their earthly possessions. Many of the bishops, who, by precept and example, should have guided others, have neglected their divine calling to engage in worldly concerns." Such being the state of things in many of the churches, it will be easily understood that a persecution, which was now an unusual occurrence, and which in the present case became after the first outbreak extremely violent, must have produced a powerful impression.

It was certainly the design of the emperor *entirely to suppress Christianity*. In the year 250 he ordered rigorous search to be made for all persons suspected of non-compliance with the national worship, and the Christians were to be required to conform to the religious ceremonies of the Roman state. In case they refused, threats, and then, if necessary, the torture, were to be employed to compel submission. If they remained firm, it was resolved to inflict, particularly on the bishops, whom the emperor hated most bitterly, the punishment of death. There was a disposition, however, to try first the effect of commands, threats, persuasions, and the milder penalties. By degrees recourse was had to more violent measures; and gradually the persecution extended into the provinces from the capital of the empire—where the

\* In his *Sermo de lapsis*

presence of an emperor known to be hostile to the Christians called forth the severest proceedings. Wherever the imperial edict was carried into execution, the first step was publicly to appoint a day for all the Christians of a place presenting themselves before the magistrate, renouncing their religion, and offering at the altar. Those who before the expiration of this interval fled their country, had their goods confiscated, and were themselves forbidden to return under penalty of death. But if, unwilling to make so immediate a sacrifice of the earthly goods for the heavenly treasure, they waited in the expectation that some expedient might perhaps yet be found whereby both could be retained, then, unless they had voluntarily presented themselves by the day appointed, they were brought up for examination before the magistrate, assisted by five of the principal citizens.\* After repeated application of the torture, those who remained firm were cast into prison, where recourse was also had to the torments of hunger and thirst to overcome their resolution. The extreme penalty of death does not appear to have been frequently resorted to. Many magistrates, whose avarice exceeded their zeal for the laws, or who were really desirous of sparing the Christians, gladly let them off, even without sacrificing, provided they bought a certificate, or libel, as it was called, attesting that they had satisfactorily complied with the requisitions of the edict.† Some Christians pursued a bolder course, and, instead of providing such certificates, maintained, without appearing before the authorities, that their names were entered on the magistrate's protocol among those by whom the edict had been obeyed (*acta facientes*).‡ Many erred through ignorance; supposing themselves guilty of no violation of religious constancy, if, without either sacrificing or burning incense in violation of their professed faith, they only allowed others to report that they had done so. But this proceeding the church always condemned as a tacit abjuration.§

\* Cyprian. ep. 40. *Quinque primores illi, qui edicto nuper magistratibus fuerant copulati, ut fidem nostram subruerent.* The expression edicto renders it not probable, to say the least, that this regulation was confined to Carthage alone.

† Those who procured such a certificate were styled *libellatici*.

‡ Cyprian. ep. 31. *Qui acta fecissent, licet presentes cum fierent, non affuissent—ut sic scriberetur mandando.*

§ The Roman clergy, in their letter to Cyprian, say, *Non est immunis*



The effect produced by this sanguinary edict among the Christians in large cities, such as Alexandria and Carthage, may best be described in the words of Dionysius, bishop of the former place.\* "All," says he, "were thrown into consternation by the terrible decree; and of the more distinguished citizens,† many immediately presented themselves of their own accord: some, private individuals, impelled by their fears; others as holding some public office, and being forced to do so by their employment;‡ while others again were urged forward by their relations and friends. As the name of each was called, they approached the unholy offering; some pale and trembling, as if they were going to be sacrificed instead of to *sacrifice*, so that the populace, who thronged around, jeered them; and it was plain to all that they were equally afraid to sacrifice or to die. Others advanced with more alacrity, carrying their boldness so far as to avow they never had been Christians. In all of these was verified the saying of our Lord, 'How hardly can a rich man enter into the kingdom of heaven!' As to the rest, some followed the examples set them by their more distinguished brethren; others betook themselves to flight; others were arrested. Of the last, a part held out, indeed, till the manacles were fastened on, and some even suffered themselves to be imprisoned for several days; but all abjured before they were summoned to appear at the tribunal. Others bore the tortures to a certain point, but finally gave in. Yet there were firm and ever blessed pillars of the Lord, who through Him were made strong, enduring with a power and steadfastness worthy of, and corresponding to, the strength of their faith, and became wonderful witnesses

a scelere, qui ut fieret imperavit, nec est alienus a crimine, cujus consensu licet non a se admissum crimen tamen publice legitur.

\* Euseb. l. VI. c. 41.

† Οἱ περιφανέστεροι, the personæ insignes, on whom the attention of the pagans was always first directed, and who, above all others, were exposed to danger.

‡ Among the personæ insignes, a distinction was made between the ιδιωτεύοντες, who appeared voluntarily before the civil authorities and complied with the edict, and the δημοσιεύοντες, οἱ ὑπὸ τῶν πράξεων ἡγούμενοι, who were obliged by their official duties to appear in the places of public resort, and were therefore under the necessity of deciding immediately whether they would obey the edict, or render themselves liable to the penalty by their disobedience publicly expressed.

of his kingdom." Among these Dionysius mentions a boy, fifteen years of age, Dioscurus by name, who, by his apt replies and constancy under torture, forced the admiration of the governor himself, who finally dismissed him, declaring that, on account of his youth, he was willing to allow him time for reflection.

If the number both of the wavering, or of those who succumbed in the struggle, was great, yet were there also many glorious examples of the power of faith, and of Christian devotedness. Such at Carthage was one Numidicus, who, for his exemplary conduct in the persecution, was made a presbyter by Cyprian. This man, after having inspired many with courage to suffer martyrdom, and having seen his own wife perish at the stake, had himself been left for dead, half burned and covered by a heap of stones. His daughter went to search for the body of her father, in order to bury it. Great was her joy at finding it still giving signs of life, and by her filial assiduities she finally succeeded in completely restoring him to health. Another, a woman, had been brought to the altar by her husband, where she was forced to offer. But she exclaimed to the person who held her hand, "I did it not,—it was you that did it;" and she was thereupon condemned to exile.\* In the dungeon at Carthage we find confessors of Christ, whom their persecutors had endeavoured, for eight days, by heat, hunger, and thirst, to force to recant, and who looked death by starvation in the face unmoved.† Certain confessors at Rome, who had already been confined for a year, wrote to the bishop Cyprian in the following terms:‡ "What more glorious and blessed lot can, by God's grace, fall to man, than, amidst tortures and the fear of death itself, to confess God the Lord; with lacerated bodies, and a spirit departing, but yet free, to confess Christ the Son of God; to become fellow-sufferers with Christ in the name of Christ? If we have not yet shed our blood, we are ready to shed it. Pray then, beloved Cyprian, that the Lord would daily confirm and strengthen each one of us, more and more, with the power of his might, and that he, as the best of captains, may at length conduct to the battle which is before us his soldiers, whom he has trained and proved in the dangerous camp,

\* Cyprian. ep. 18.

† Ep. 21. Luciani ap. Cyprian.

‡ Ep. 26.



armed with those divine weapons which never can be conquered.”\*

The hatred of the emperor directed itself particularly against the bishops, and perhaps the punishment of death was expressly intended for them alone. At the very outbreak of the persecution, the Roman bishop Fabianus suffered martyrdom. Several of the bishops withdrew from their communities till the first tempest of the persecution should be over. This course might seem an act of weakness, if they had been impelled to it by a fear of death which threatened them in the first instance. But they were probably actuated by loftier motives. As their presence served only to exasperate the pagans, they perhaps might look upon it as a duty to contribute, by their temporary absence, to the peace of their flocks, and moreover, so far as was consistent with steadfastness in the faith and the diligent discharge of their pastoral duties, to preserve their own lives and ministrations for the future benefit of their communities and of the church. But such a step was naturally open to different interpretations, and the bishops, especially those of the large capital towns, on whom all eyes were turned, became thereby obnoxious to much obloquy. Even Cyprian did not escape censure, when, at the cry of the furious pagans demanding his execution, he withdrew for a period into a place of concealment.† His later conduct, at least, shows that he could triumph over the fear of death, and the frankness and peace of conscience with which he explains his conduct, in a letter to the Roman church, are sufficient to exonerate him from all blame.‡ “At the first beginning of the troubles,” he writes, “when with furious outcries the people had repeatedly demanded my death, I withdrew for a time, not so much out of regard for my own safety, as for the public peace of the brethren, that the tumult might not be increased by my presence, which was so offensive to the heathen.” This conduct was in accordance with the principles on which in similar cases he recommended others to act.§ “On this account our Lord,” he says, “commanded us, in times

\* Ephes. 6, 11.

† The Roman clergy, in their letter to the *Clerus* at Carthage, express themselves with some doubt on the matter: “They had learned Cyprianum secessisse certa ex causa, quod utique recte fecerit, propterea quod sit persona insignis.” Ep. 2.

‡ Ep. 14.

§ De lapsis.

of persecution, to give way and fly; he prescribed this rule, and followed it himself. For as the martyr's crown comes from the grace of God, and cannot be gained if the appointed hour has not arrived, he who withdraws for a season, while he still remains true to Christ, denies not the faith, but abides his time." There was, unquestionably, a difference between the case of Christians generally, and of one who had the pastoral office and duties to discharge towards souls which were committed to his care. But Cyprian neglected none of these obligations. He could truly say that, although absent in the body, yet in spirit he was constantly present with his flock, and by counsel and act endeavoured to guide them according to the precepts of his Lord.\* From his retirement he maintained a constant correspondence with his people by means of certain ecclesiastics. The letters which he thus sent show how truly he could say this of himself; how vigilantly he laboured to maintain the discipline and order of his church, and in every way to provide both for the wants of the poor, who were hindered by the persecution from pursuing their ordinary employments, and for the relief of such as were in prison. The same principles of Christian prudence which moved him to avoid a momentary danger were also maintained in his exhortations to his flock, in which, while he exhorted them to Christian courage and constancy, he warned them against all fanatical extravagance. "I beg of you," he writes to his clergy,† "to be slack neither in prudence nor care for the preservation of quiet; and if, through love, our brethren are anxious to visit those worthy confessors whom divine grace has already honoured by a glorious beginning, let it at all events be done circumspectly, and not in crowds, lest the suspicion of the heathen should be excited, and so all access to them should be prohibited, and, in our eagerness for too much, we should lose the whole. Be careful, then, for the greater safety, to manage this matter with due moderation. In administering the communion to the prisoners in their dungeon, let the presbyters, as well as the deacons who assist, do so in rotation; for, by such a change of persons and of visitors, we shall best avoid exciting the jealousy of our oppressors. Indeed, we must in all things, as becomes the servants of God, meekly and humbly accommodate ourselves to the times, and labour

\* Ep. 14.

† Ep. 4



to preserve peace and the welfare of our people." He advised his church to regard this persecution as a call to prayer.\* "Let each of us," he says, "pray to God, not for himself only, but for all the brethren, according to the form which our Lord has given us, where we are taught to pray not as individuals for ourselves alone, but, as a common brotherhood, for all. When the Lord shall see us humble and peaceable, united among ourselves, and made better by our present sufferings, he will deliver us from the persecutions of our enemies."

From a comparison of the letters of Cyprian, written at this date, with that of Dionysius of Alexandria, it would appear that the persecution became gradually more severe. This increased severity, however, may be accounted for without supposing that any new edict was issued by the emperor Decius. As so many had faltered on the first menace, it was hoped that Christianity might easily be crushed without resorting to extremities, if only the bishops could be removed, who constantly kept up their zeal for the faith. The management of the whole matter in the several provinces had at first been intrusted to the city and local magistrates, as being, from their acquaintance with the individual citizens, best qualified to deal with them, and to determine the fittest means to operate most effectually upon each one, according to his particular character and his particular connections. The severest penalties inflicted at first were imprisonment and exile. When, however, the hopes which the first success had excited were disappointed, the proconsuls took the matter into their own hands, and more violent proceedings were immediately adopted against those whose constancy had been the cause of this disappointment, in order to force them to yield at least like the rest. Hunger and thirst, the most refined and cruel methods of torture, in some cases the punishment of death, were now employed, and inflicted even upon many who were not connected with the sacred office. But it was natural that men would grow tired of their fury in course of time, and their excited passions would cool again. The change, moreover, which took place in the provincial governments, when, in the beginning of the year 251, the old proconsuls and presidents laid down their office, might, for a time, have been

\* Ep. 7.

favourable for the Christians. Finally, the attention of Decius himself was withdrawn from persecuting the Christians by political events of greater importance—the insurrection in Macedonia, and the Gothic war. And it was in the latter war, towards the close of the year, that he lost his life. The calm in consequence of this event which the Christians enjoyed continued under the reign of Gallus and Volusianus, during a part of the following year 252. But a destructive pestilence, which, having broke out in the preceding reign, was now gradually spreading its ravages through the whole Roman empire, while drought and famine were afflicting several of the provinces, excited as usual the fury of the populace against the Christians.\* An imperial edict was put forth enjoining all the subjects of the Roman emperors to sacrifice to the gods, in order to obtain deliverance from so grievous a national calamity.† The public attention was again arrested by the numbers who withdrew from these solemnities because they were Christians. Hence arose new persecutions in the hope of increasing the number of sacrifices, and of sustaining the old religion, which was everywhere declining.

On the approach of these new trials Cyprian wrote a letter of encouragement to the African church of the Thibaritans,‡ in which he thus addresses them:—"Let no one, my dearest brethren, when he observes how our congregations are scattered by the fear of persecution, be disturbed because he no longer sees the brethren together, nor hears the bishops preach. We, who may not shed the blood of others, but must rather be ready to pour out our own, cannot at such a time meet together. Wherever it happens in these days that a brother is, by the necessity of the times, separated awhile from the church in body, not in spirit, let him not be deterred by the fearful circumstances of such a flight, nor appalled at the solitude of the desert, which he may be obliged to make his refuge. *He* is not alone who has Christ for a companion in his flight; he is not alone who, preserving the temple of God inviolate, is not without God, wherever he may be. And if robber or wild

\* See Cyprian's Apology for the Christians against the charges of Demetrianus.

† Cypriani ep. 55 ad Cornel. Sacrificia, quæ edicto proposito celebrare populus jubebatur.

‡ Ep. 56.



beast attack the fugitive in the desert or on the mountains; if hunger, thirst, or cold destroy him; or if, while his flight leads him over the sea, the storm and waves overwhelm him, still Christ is present to witness the conduct of his soldier wherever he fights."

The bishops of the metropolis, under the very eye of the emperor, became naturally the first mark of persecution. For how could men expect to put down the Christians in the provinces, if their bishops were tolerated in *Rome*? Cornelius, who, at the hazard of his life, entered on his office while Decius was yet emperor, was first banished, then condemned to death. Lucius, who had the Christian courage to succeed him in the office during these perilous times, became soon afterwards his successor also in exile and martyrdom.

Yet the wars and insurrections which occupied the attention of Gallus prevented him from prosecuting with vigour any general persecution in the provinces; and these events, which terminated, in the summer of the year 253, with his assassination, at length restored tranquillity and peace to the Christians throughout the empire.

The emperor Valerian, in the first year of his reign, treated the Christians with unusual clemency; indeed, he is said to have had many of them about his person and in his palace.\* But if, without intending in the least to allow the old state religion to perish, he gave himself at first no concern about the affairs of religion, and let things take their course, yet the increasing numbers of the Christians, whose influence reached even his court, may have been used as an argument to convince him of the necessity of stricter measures. At first, when, in 257, he suffered himself to be persuaded into a change of measures towards the Christians, it was manifestly his object to check the advance of Christianity without bloodshed. The churches were only to be deprived of their teachers and pastors, and particularly of their bishops. The assembling also of the congregations was prohibited. In this way the trial was made, whether the end could be accomplished without the effusion of blood.

The forms of procedure, in the first persecution under this emperor, may be clearly ascertained from the protocols or

\* See the letter of Dionysius of Alexandria, in Eusebius, l. VII. c. 10.

minutes of the examinations of the bishops Cyprian and Dionysius. The proconsul Paternus, having summoned Cyprian before his tribunal, addressed him thus: "The emperors Valerianus and Gallienus have sent me a rescript, in which they command that all those who do not observe the Roman religion shall immediately adopt the Roman ceremonies. I ask, therefore, what are you? what do you answer?" *Cyprian*.—"I am a Christian and a bishop. I know of no other god than the true and only God, who created the heavens, the earth, the sea, and all that is therein. This God we Christians serve; to him we pray, day and night, for ourselves, for all men, and for the welfare of the emperors themselves." *The proconsul*.—"Do you persist, then, in this resolution?" *Cyprian*.—"A good resolution, grounded on the knowledge of God, cannot be changed." Upon this, the proconsul, in obedience to the imperial edict, sentenced him to banishment. At the same time he explained to Cyprian that the rescript applied not only to the bishops, but also to the priests, and proceeded thus: "I desire, therefore, to know of you who are the priests that reside in this city." *Cyprian*.—"Your laws justly forbid the laying of informations; I therefore cannot tell you who they are; but in the places where they preside you will be able to find them." *Proconsul*.—"We are concerned at present only with this place. To-day our investigation is limited to the present place." *Cyprian*.—"As our doctrine forbids a man to give himself up, and as it is likewise contrary to your own rules, *they* cannot give themselves up; but if you seek for them, you will find them." The proconsul dismissed him with the declaration that the assembling of the Christians in any place soever, and the visiting of Christian cemeteries, (which more than aught else served to kindle the enthusiasm of the Christians,) were forbidden under pain of death.

The design, at present, was simply to separate the bishops entirely from their churches; but spiritual ties are not to be sundered by any earthly power. We soon find not only bishops and clergy, who, however, were all along the special objects of persecution, but members also of the laity, even women and children, subjected to the scourge, and then condemned to imprisonment, or to labour in the mines. They had probably been seized at the cemeteries, or in the churches,



where they had been forbidden to assemble. Cyprian, from his place of exile at Curubis, was active in providing for their bodily and spiritual wants, and in proving his sympathy by words and deeds of love. On sending them, for their support and for the relief of their sufferings, a large sum of money, taken from his own income and the church chest, he thus addressed them: \* "In the mines, the body is refreshed not by beds and pillows, but by the comforts and joys of Christ. Your limbs, wearied with labour, recline upon the earth; but it is no punishment to lie there with Christ. If the outward man is defiled, the inner man is but the more purified by the spirit from above. Your bread is scanty; but man lives not by bread alone, but by the word of God. You are in want of clothing to defend you from the cold; but he who has put on Christ has clothing and ornament enough. Even though, my dearest brethren, you cannot now celebrate the communion of the Lord's supper, your faith need feel no want. You do celebrate the most glorious communion; you do bring God the most costly oblation, since the holy scriptures declare that God will not despise a broken and a contrite spirit. You offer and present yourselves to God a holy and lively sacrifice." "Your example," he writes to the clergy, "has been followed by a large portion of the church, who have confessed with you and been crowned. United to you by ties of the strongest love, they could not be separated from their pastors by dungeons and mines. Even young maidens and boys are with you. What power have you now in a victorious conscience—what triumph in your hearts, when you can walk through the mines with enslaved bodies, but with hearts conscious of mastery; when you know that Christ is with you, rejoicing in the patience of his servants, who, in his footsteps and by his ways, are entering into the kingdom of eternity!"

The emperor must soon have learned that nothing could be accomplished by such measures. The exiled bishops, though outwardly separated from their flocks, were still, as it were, in the midst of them. By letters, by clergy who were passing to and fro, they still exercised an influence over the churches, and their exile only made them dearer to their people. Wherever they were banished, a little church was soon gathered round them; so that, in many countries where the seed of the gospel had

\* Ep. 77.

never before been sown, the kingdom of God was now first set up by exiles, whose life as well as lips bore testimony to their faith. Thus Dionysius, the bishop of Alexandria, who had been banished to a remote district of Libya, could say of his exile, \* “We were, at first, persecuted and stoned; but ere long, not a few of the pagans forsook their idols, and turned to God. It was by us that the first seed of the divine word was conveyed to that spot; and, as if God had sent us thither expressly for this purpose, he brought us back again as soon as we had fulfilled the commission.”

Valerian, therefore, soon thought it necessary to employ more vigorous and severe measures if he would effect a total suppression of Christianity. In the following year (258) appeared the edict. “Let bishops, presbyters, and deacons be immediately put to death by the sword; let senators and knights be, first of all, deprived of their rank and property, and then, if they still continue to be Christians, let them suffer the due punishment of death; let women of condition, after forfeiting their property, be banished. Those Christians who were in the service of the palace,”—slaves and freedmen are, without doubt, chiefly meant by these words,—“who had formerly made profession of Christianity, or should now make such profession, should be treated as the emperor’s property, and, being put in chains,† distributed to labour among the imperial estates or on the public works.”‡ From

\* Euseb. l. VII. c. 11.

† Perhaps, according to one reading, branded also.

‡ The rescript of the emperor to the senate, in the original, is extant in Cyprian, ep. 82, ad Successum: Ut episcopi et presbyteri et diacones in continenti animadvertantur; senatores vero, et egregii viri et (the second et is doubtless surreptitious—the egregii viri are the equites themselves, as the senators are the clarissimi) equites Romani, dignitate amissa, etiam bonis spoliuntur, et si, ademptis facultatibus, Christiani esse perseveraverint, capite quoque mulcentur; matronæ vero, ademptis bonis, in exsilium releguntur; Cæsariani autem quicunque vel prius confessi fuerant, vel nunc confessi fuerint, confiscantur et vineti in Cæsarianas possessiones descripti mittantur. Instead of descripti (distributed), another text has scripti, or inscripti—*branded*. That as early as the persecution of Decian, Christians were branded on the forehead, may be gathered from a passage in Pontius’ Life of Cyprian: Tot confessores frontium notatorum secunda inscriptione signatos. The prima inscriptio, namely, the inscriptio crucis, χαρακτήρ, σφραγὶς τοῦ σταυροῦ, was that received at baptism. Yet the position of the words would better correspond, perhaps, with the common reading.



this rescript it is evident that the emperor's first object was *to deprive the Christians of their spiritual heads, and to check the progress of Christianity in the higher classes*. Unnecessary cruelty did not enter into his design. The people, however, and the governors did not always stop here, as we learn from the history of certain martyrdoms of the time, against the authenticity of which no valid objection can be urged.

The Roman bishop Sixtus, and four deacons of his church, were the first who suffered under this rescript; their martyrdom took place on the sixth of August, 258.

In the provinces the new governors had provisionally recalled from exile those whom their predecessors had banished, and were now obliging them to await in retirement the decision of their fate by the new rescript which was expected from Rome. Cyprian was residing at a secluded villa in the neighbourhood of Carthage, when he heard that he was to be conveyed to Utica, there to receive his sentence from the proconsul, who happened to be temporarily residing at that place. It was his wish, however, like a faithful shepherd, to give his last testimony, by word and by suffering, in the presence of his flock; he therefore yielded to the entreaties of his friends, and withdrew a while, until the proconsul should return. From the place of his concealment he addressed his last letter to his flock.\* "I allowed myself," he says, "to be persuaded to retire for a time, because it is fitting that a bishop should confess the Lord in the place where he is set over the church of the Lord, so that the whole church may be honoured by the confession of their bishop. For whatsoever the confessing bishop utters in the moment of confession, comes, under the guidance of the divine Spirit, from the mouths of all. Let me, then, in this secret retirement, await the return of the proconsul to Carthage, that I may learn from him the decree of the emperor with regard both to the laity and the bishops among the Christians, and to speak whatever the Lord in that hour may cause me to speak. But do you, my dearest brethren, agreeably to the precepts which, according to the doctrine of the Lord, you have often heard from me, study to preserve quiet. Let no one lead the brethren into tumults, nor voluntarily give himself up to the heathen. The only time for any one to speak is

\* Ep. 83.

when he has been apprehended; in that hour, the *Lord*, who dwells in us, speaks in us." At length, on the fourteenth of September, the proconsul returned, and, when the fatal sentence was pronounced, the last words of Cyprian were, "God be thanked." \*

This persecution ended with the reign of its author. Valerian having, by the unfortunate issue of the war, become a prisoner in the hands of the Persians, his son Gallienus, who had already been associated with him in the government, obtained, in the year 259, the undivided sovereignty. This prince was more indifferent than his father about public affairs, and consequently also cared little for the maintenance of the national worship. Immediately upon his accession he published an edict, by which he secured to the Christians the free exercise of their religion, and commanded restoration to be made to them of the cemeteries, as well as of all other buildings and lands belonging to the churches, which had been confiscated in the preceding reign. By this act he recognised *the Christian church as a legally existing corporation*; for no other, according to the Roman laws, could hold common property.

But as Macrianus had usurped the imperial authority in the East and in Egypt, it was not until after his overthrow, A.D. 261, that the edict of toleration, by Gallienus, could be carried into effect in these provinces.† Hence, while the Christians of the West were already in the enjoyment of repose, in these provinces the persecutions were still going on under the edict of Valerian. A remarkable example which occurred at this period in Palestine is recorded by Eusebius.‡ Marius, a Christian soldier of Cæsarea Stratonis, was about to be invested with the office of centurion. Just as the centurion's staff (the *vitis*) was held out for his acceptance, another soldier, who had the next promise of promotion, stepped forward and declared that, according to the ancient laws, Marius was incapable of holding rank in the Roman army, because he was a Christian, and did not sacrifice to the gods and to the emperor. Upon this, a delay of three hours was granted to Marius, within which he must decide whether he would remain

\* He was condemned as *inimicus Diis Romanis et sacris legibus*.

† Eusebius (l. VII. c. 13) has not preserved the original edict of this emperor, but the rescript by which the same edict, after the defeat of Macrianus, was applied also to Egypt.

‡ L. VII. c. 15.



a Christian. Meanwhile the bishop Theotecnus led him into the church. On the one hand, he pointed to the sword which the centurion wore at his side, and, on the other, to a volume of the gospels, which he held up before him. He was to choose between the two—the military office and the gospel. Without hesitation, Marius raised his right hand and seized the sacred volume. “Now,” said the bishop, “hold fast on God, and may you obtain what you have chosen. Depart in peace.” After a brave confession he was beheaded.

The law of Gallienus must have wrought a considerable change in the condition of the Christians, which was moreover pregnant with important consequences. The step was now taken at which many an emperor, still more favourably disposed to Christianity than Gallienus, had hesitated. Christianity was become a *religio licita*; and the religious party that threatened destruction to the old religion of the state, and to all institutions connected with it, had now, at last, attained a legal existence. Many a prince who at an earlier period, and under the existing laws, would have had no scruple in persecuting the Christians, would now doubtless be shy of attacking a corporation established by law. This was clearly shown in the instance of Lucius Domitius Aurelian, the second emperor after Gallienus, who became emperor in 270. Sprung from a low rank, and educated in pagan superstition, he could hardly be otherwise than hostilely disposed towards the Christians from the very first. Not only was he devoted with singular fanaticism to the Oriental worship of the Sun—which, however, would doubtless not prevent him from tolerating many other foreign rites—but he was also in every respect a blind devotee to the old religion. The well-being of the state seemed to him closely dependent on the due administration of the ancient *sacra*. During a threatening danger of a war with the German tribes, upon a motion being made in the Roman senate that, according to the ancient practice, the Sibylline books should be opened and consulted, certain senators replied that there was no need of having recourse to them—the emperor’s power was so great that it was unnecessary to consult the gods. The matter remained unnoticed for a time, but it was afterwards called up again. But the emperor, who had been informed of these proceedings in the Roman senate, expressed his displeasure, and wrote to them—

"I am surprised that you have hesitated so long about consulting the Sibylline books, as if you were conducting your deliberations in a Christian church, and not in the temple of all the gods."\* He called upon them to support him in every way by the ceremonies of religion; for it could be no disgrace to conquer with the assistance of the gods. He told them that he was ready to defray all expenses which might be incurred in offering every description of sacrifice, and to *furnish captives for that purpose from all nations*; consequently he must have included *human sacrifices* among the list.† We may presume, therefore, that this emperor was not averse to the shedding of the blood of the Christians in honour of his gods. He was inclined by natural temperament to harsh and violent measures. In the first years of his reign, however, he engaged in no persecution of the Christians. He even showed by his conduct, on one occasion, that he recognised the Christian church as a lawfully existing corporation. A dispute having arisen (A. D. 272) among the Christians of Antioch, as to who should be their bishop, the church applied to the emperor himself, submitting that the bishop Paul of Samosata, who had long since been deposed on account of his doctrinal opinions, but who found a patroness in Queen Zenobia (recently conquered by Aurelian), should be *compelled* to resign his office. The emperor decided that he should be bishop who was recognised as such by the bishop of Rome, which was the seat of his own court. It was not till the year 275, when busied with warlike enterprises in Thrace, that, in order perhaps to show his gratitude to the gods, who, in his opinion, had hitherto so signally favoured him, and to conciliate their good will for the future, he resolved to dismiss all further scruples, and proceed to extremities against the Christians. But before he could carry his plan into effect he was murdered by conspirators.‡

\* This language perhaps may have conveyed a suspicion that there were several Christians among the senators themselves, who had an influence on the deliberations.

† Flav. Vopisc. c. 20.

‡ Eusebius says, in his History of the Church, that Aurelian died as he was upon the point of subscribing an edict against the Christians. In the book *De mortibus persecutorum* it is said the edict had already been issued, but could not reach the more distant provinces until after the death of the emperor. Others represent the persecution as having



For more than fifty years the Christian church enjoyed a state of peace and repose. In the mean while the number of the Christians continued to increase in every rank of society. But among the multitude who embraced Christianity at a time when it required no sacrifice to be a Christian, many, without doubt, were but external professors who brought over with them into the Christian church the vices of paganism. With the increased wealth of its members the outward form of the church underwent a change, and in large cities, in the place of the old simple places of assembly, splendid churches began to be erected. The emperor Dioclesian, who from the year 284 was sole emperor, but who within two years shared the imperial throne with Maximian Herculus, seemed, to outward appearance at least, no otherwise than favourable to the Christians. All the stories of persecutions in the earlier years of this emperor are at variance with the records of authentic history, and altogether unworthy of credit. Christians held offices of trust in the imperial palace. They were to be found among the principal eunuchs and chamberlains (*cubicularii*). Still it could not, it is true, be fairly presumed, from this circumstance alone, that the emperor was governed by any special regard for the Christians, since from an early period Christians had been members of the imperial household (*Cæsariani*). For if but one individual were such, his zeal and prudence might have a great influence in inducing the majority of his associates to embrace Christianity, or in causing that none but Christians should be chosen to these offices.

Such, probably, was Lucianus, the chief chamberlain (*præpositus cubiculariorum*), a man in high favour with the emperor, and to whom Theonas, bishop of Alexandria, gave much excellent advice on the duties of his office, in a letter which has come down to our times.\* He exhorts him to assume no

already begun. But it is most probable that the report of Eusebius, who says the least, contains the truth, and the rest was added through exaggeration.

\* This letter was first published in the 3rd vol. of D'Archery's *Spicilegium*, f. 297, and again reprinted in Galland's *Bibl. patr.* T. IV. It cannot, we must admit, be ascertained *who* the emperor was that is spoken of in this letter, nor who the bishop Theonas was, by whom it was written. It states how Christianity was glorified by the persecutions, how its diffusion was promoted by them, and, finally, how peace

merit to himself, because through him many in the palace of the emperor had been brought to a knowledge of the truth; but rather to give thanks to God for having made him the instrument of so good a work, and given him great weight with the emperor, in order that, by his means, the reputation of the Christian name might be promoted. If, however, the bishop urges him to greater zeal and prudence, because the emperor, though not a Christian himself,\* yet intrusted to Christians, as his most faithful servants, the care of his life and person, we ought not, from an expression of this kind, to infer too much as to the emperor's favourable opinion of Christianity. The bishop probably allowed himself to transfer his own sentiments to the emperor. Indeed, this seems to be the case from his mentioning the fact that many who had entered into the service of the palace as pagans had been converted by the influence of this Lucian. The possibility of the care of the imperial library being committed to one of the Christian chamberlains† is spoken of as likely to be a very important occurrence. The favoured individual is exhorted to take advantage of the opportunity thus afforded him to dispose the emperor favourably towards Christianity. He was not to show a contempt for pagan literature, but to let it be seen that he was a proficient in it: he was to praise it, and to use it for the emperor's entertainment. Only he ought at times to introduce some notice of the sacred scriptures, and endea-

was granted to the church by good princes. *Persecutionum procellis velut aurum in fornace expurgatum enituit et ejus veritas ac celsitudo magis semper ac magis splendent, ut jam, pace per bonum principem ecclesiis concessa, Christianorum opera etiam coram infidelibus luceant.* By this prince we might understand Constantine; but if he were intended, the persecution of Dioclesian, which had so immediately preceded, would doubtless have been more distinctly noticed. If, moreover, it had been written subsequently to the final triumph of Christianity, which followed the Dioclesian persecution, the author assuredly would not have employed so indistinct a phraseology as—*Quia nos maleficos olim et omnibus flagitiis refertos nonnulli priores principes putaverunt.* On the other hand, these words suit well to the times of Dioclesian. Besides, the situation of the emperor, which is here the subject of discourse, is by no means such as could apply to the case of Constantine, especially after he had become master of the East. The expression "*pacem concedere,*" is so general that it might be properly applied to the tranquil situation which the Christians owed to Dioclesian.

\* *Principes, nondum Christianæ religioni adscriptus.*

† For the librarian was still a pagan.



vour to lead the emperor to remark their superiority. It might so happen, in the course of conversation, that Christ would be mentioned: in that case it might be gradually shown that he is the only true God.\* So important did it seem to the wise bishop to warn against an intemperate zeal, which, by attempting too much at once, might do more harm than good.

To Roman statesmen the thought would naturally occur, that the ancient political glory of the emperor was intimately connected with the old national worship, and that it was impossible to restore the one without the other. Now, as it was Dioclesian's wish to revive the original splendour of the empire, it perhaps appeared to him absolutely necessary to infuse new life into the old religion, which was now fast hastening to decay, and to destroy that foreign faith which on every side continued to extend itself, and threatened to become supreme and exclusive. In an inscription which belongs to a somewhat later date, the emperor boasts of having suppressed Christianity, while the Christians are charged with bringing on the ruin of the state.† In the edict, too, by which Galerius put an end to the persecution which he himself had instigated, he declares that it had been the intention of the emperors to reform and correct matters in accordance with the ancient laws and constitution of the Roman state.‡ If, therefore, while the motives which we have already mentioned were sufficient to induce the emperor to enter upon a course of persecution, he yet abstained from so doing for a considerable period, we must not suppose that the constraining cause was any regard for the rights of man, or for the limits which ought to confine the civil power in matters of conscience. To such ideas he was as much a stranger as the earlier emperors. How entirely foreign to the views of Dioclesian a recognition of this kind was, is evinced by the principles which he openly avows in a law directed against the Manichæan sect, A.D. 296; notwithstanding the allowances that must be made for the peculiar aversion that he entertained for this

\* *Insurgere poterit Christi mentio. Explicabitur paulatim ejus sola divinitas. Omnia hæc cum Christi adjutorio provenire possent.*

† *Christiani, qui rem publicam evertabant.*

‡ *Nos quidem volueramus juxta leges veteres et publicam disciplinam Romanorum cuncta corrigere.*

sect, on account of its having arisen among his enemies the Persians.\* “The immortal gods have, by their providence, arranged and established what is right. Many wise and good men agree that this should be maintained without change. They ought not to be opposed. No new religion ought to presume to censure the old; for it is the greatest of crimes to overturn what has been once established by our ancestors, and what has supremacy in the state.” Would not the principles here avowed necessarily make Dioclesian an enemy and persecutor of Christianity also? †

But if, during so long a period, he could not bring himself openly to act upon them in this instance, some counteracting cause must have been at work on the other side. Beside the influence which the Christians more or less immediately about his person may have had upon him, he may have been induced to hesitate by reasons similar to those which, in the work *De mortibus persecutorum*, he is said to have urged upon his son-in-law Galerius, in the conference at Nicomedia (which we shall soon have more particularly to notice). The Christians, he urged, after a long period, had at length become a lawful religious community; they are widely diffused in every part of the empire; the bloodshed would be profuse, and the public tranquillity was likely to be disturbed; and, finally, the effusion of blood had hitherto served to advance Christianity rather than to subvert it. Anxious as Dioclesian might be to revive the old Roman religion, yet assuredly he would never have overcome these scruples had not some more powerful influence hurried him on.

The pagans could not but see that the time when their ancient ceremonies were to cease, and the hated Christianity become predominant, was fast approaching. They would therefore naturally strain every nerve to avert the decisive crisis. The pagan party, to which belonged statesmen, priests,

\* This edict, known already to Hilarius, author of the Commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul, bears every internal mark of genuineness; and no motive can be imagined, either in pagan or Christian, for fabricating it. The diffusion of that sect at this earlier period in Africa, which is presupposed in the edict, is a thing by no means impossible.

† *Neque reprehendi a nova vetus religio deberet. Maximi enim criminis est, retractare quæ semel ab antiquis tractata et definita sunt, statum et cursum tenent et possident.*



and self-styled philosophers like Hierocles,\* wanted only a powerful instrument to carry their schemes into execution. And this they found in Dioclesian's son-in-law, the Cæsar, Caius Galerius Maximian. This prince had raised himself from obscurity by his warlike talents. Educated in the blindest superstition of heathenism, he was devoted to his religion, and moreover attached great virtue to sacrifices and divinations. These ceremonies he frequently performed in time of war. Whenever, on these occasions, Christian officers were present, they signed themselves with the cross, the symbol of Christ's victory over the kingdom of darkness, in order to protect themselves against the influence of those hostile (demoniacal) powers, whose agency they believed to be visibly manifested in the pagan worship.

Now as the Christians saw in paganism not a barely subjective notion, a work of human imagination or fraud, but a real outward power, hostile to Christianity;† so the pagans beheld, *after their manner*, in Christianity, a similar power opposed to the operations and appearances of their own gods. The pagan priests could therefore well say,—the sign of the cross, hateful to the gods, keeps them from being present and from manifesting themselves at the sacrifices and other rites consecrated to their service.‡

\* Not the author of the Commentary on the Golden Verses.

† In the fourth century, when the triumph of Christianity was already decided, and paganism no longer presented itself to the Christian consciousness as a formidable power in life, another view of the matter could well be admitted. Thus we find Eusebius of Cæsarea saying that the pagan art of divination ought to be traced, not to the influence of the gods, nor even to demons, but to human fraud, which was sufficient to account for it altogether. After having spoken of the deceptive arts of pagan priests and magicians which had been exposed in the times of the Emperor Constantine, he says, Ταῦτα δὴ τις καὶ πλείω τούτων ἔστι συνάγων, εἴποι ἂν μὴ θεοὶς εἶναι. μηδὲ μὴν δαίμονας τοὺς τῶν κατὰ πολεῖς χρησθηρίων αἰτίους, πλάνην δὲ καὶ ἀπάτην ἀνδρῶν γοητῶν. Euseb. Præparat. evangel. l. IV. c. 2.

‡ This is the view of the matter which presents itself to our minds, particularly when we compare the following passages:—Lactant. Institut. l. IV. c. 27; de moribus persecutorum, c. 10; and Euseb. vit. Constantin. l. II. c. 50. In the first-mentioned passage it is said, Cum Diis suis immolant, si assistat aliquis signatam frontem gerens, sacra nullo modo litant. Nec responsa potest consultus reddere vates. Et hæc sæpe causa præcipua justitiam persequendi malis regibus fuit. Aruspices conquerentes, profanos homines sacris interesse, egerunt prin-

There were at this time many Christians in the military service of the empire, both in the higher and lower ranks; and as yet they had never been compelled to do anything contrary to their conscience. This is evident, not only from Eusebius' narrative, but from a particularly remarkable incident, which took place in 295.\* At Teveste, in Numidia, a youth of the name of Maximilianus was brought before the proconsul as fit for military duty. But as he came up, and was about to be measured to see if his height reached the standard of the service, he exclaimed—"I cannot serve as a soldier; I cannot do what is wrong; I am a Christian." The proconsul took no notice of these words, but calmly ordered him to be measured. As he proved to be of the standard height, the proconsul, without noticing his confession of Christianity, said to him, "Take the badge of the service,† and be a soldier." The young man replied, "I shall take no such badge; I wear already the badge of Christ, my God." Upon this the proconsul, who was a pagan, said, with a sarcastic threat, "I will instantly send you to your Christ." "Would you but do that," the youth observed, "you would confer on me the highest honour." Without further remark the proconsul ordered the leaden badge of the service to be hung round his neck. The young man resisted, and, in the ardour of his youthful faith, exclaimed, "I accept not the badge of the service of this

cipes suos in furorem. True, it might be said, the Christians had only transferred their own personal sentiments to the pagans, and the legend respecting the origin of this persecution had thus arisen; but there is no good reason whatever for calling in question this explanation, derived from the very character of the times, and which suits the views both of Christians and pagans, which mutually limited each other with regard to the relation of their religious positions one to another. Thus the Christians appeal to the testimony of their adversary, Porphyry, to show that the power of Christianity had hindered the influence of those demoniacal powers in paganism; for Porphyry complains that a pestilence in some city or other could not be arrested because the appearance and healing influence of Esculapius was scared away by the worship of Jesus. Porphyry's language in his book against Christianity is as follows:—*Νυνὶ δὲ θάυμαζουσιν, εἰ ποσούτων ἐπ' αὐτῶν κατείληφε τὴν πόλιν ἡ νόσος, Ἀσκληπίου μὲν ἐπιδημίας καὶ τῶν ἄλλων θεῶν μηκέτι οὕσης. Ἰησοῦ γὰρ τιμωμένου οὐδεμίας τις θεῶν δημοσίας ὀφελείας ἤσθετο.* Euseb. *Præparat. evangel.* l. V. c. l.

\* The time can be definitely determined, since the mention of the consuls in the *actis Maximiliani*, a report drawn up by an eye-witness furnishes a certain chronological datum.

† *Signaculum militiæ.*



world, and if you hang it about me I shall break it off, for it is useless. I cannot wear this lead on my neck after having once received the saving token of my Lord Jesus Christ, whom you know not, but who suffered for our salvation." The proconsul endeavoured to explain to him that he might be a soldier and a Christian at the same time; that, in fact, Christians were to be found performing military service without scruple in the body guard of all the four Cæsars, Dioclesian, Maximian Herculus, Constantius Chlorus, and Galerius. But as the youth of one-and-twenty years could not consent to yield up his own conviction to the example of others, he was sentenced to death;\* yet in the sentence nothing was said of his Christianity: his refusal to do military service is alone assigned as the reason for his punishment.† Here, then, is good evidence that the soldiers were at liberty openly to profess Christianity, and that, if they only did their duty in other respects, they were not forced to take any part in the pagan ceremonies.

However, a few years only elapsed after this occurrence before the case was altered. Religious and political motives induced Galerius, in the first place, to remove from the army all who refused to sacrifice. It was easy for him to procure an order to be sent to the army requiring every soldier to join in the sacrificial rites. Possibly the celebration of the third lustrum for the elevation of Maximianus Herculus to the dignity of Cæsar and Augustus‡ was chosen as a fit occasion for the issuing of such an order to the army, because such festivals were usually celebrated with sacrifices and sacrificial banquets, in which all the soldiers were required to participate. Many gave up their commissions,§ and soldiers of all

\* He received his sentence to death with an expression of thanks to God. To the Christian bystanders, when he was led away from them to execution, he said, "My dearest brethren, strive with all your power that the vision of the Lord may be vouchsafed to you, and that such a crown may be bestowed on you also." And with a countenance of joy he regarded his father, who would not persuade him to act contrary to his conscience, begging of him to present the new garment which he had had made for him against his admission into the military service to the soldier who was to execute the sentence of death on him.

† Eo quod indevoto animo sacramentum militiæ recusaverit, gladio animadverti placuit.

‡ Dies natalis Cæsaris.

§ As Eusebius relates, I. VIII. c. 4.

ranks, from the highest to the lowest, quitted the service that they might remain steadfast to their faith. Only a few were sentenced to death; perhaps none except where some peculiar circumstances of the case furnished a pretext, at least in appearance, not only for dismissing them from the service as Christians, but also for punishing them as guilty of treason. Such as were not careful to observe moderation both of language and demeanour in expressing their honest indignation at the unrighteous demand, might easily, under the military code, be represented as refractory subjects. An instance of this is afforded by the case of Marcellus the centurion, who was serving with the army at Tingis (now Tangiers), in Africa.

While the legion was celebrating the festival in honour of the Cæsar, after the pagan fashion, with sacrifices and banquetings, the centurion Marcellus rose up from the soldiers' table, and throwing down his staff of office, his belt, and his arms, exclaimed—"From this moment I cease to serve your emperor as a soldier. I despise the worship of your gods of wood and stone, which are deaf and dumb idols. Since the service involves the obligation of sacrificing to the gods and to the emperors, I throw down my staff and belt, renounce the standards, and am a soldier no longer."\* All this was now put together, and Marcellus was condemned to death for having publicly cast off the badges of the service, and indulging before all the people in abusive language towards the gods and the emperors.

These were the first tokens of the persecution. Dioclesian could not, for several years, be induced to proceed any farther. But at last, in the winter of the year 303, Galerius came to Nicomedia, in Bithynia, on a visit to his aged and infirm father-in-law, who had already formed the design of resigning the imperial dignity. On this occasion Galerius, seconded by many zealous pagans among the state officers, employed all his arts of persuasion in recommending a general extermination of the Christians. At last Dioclesian yielded; and one of the great pagan festivals, the Terminalia, which occurred on the 22nd of February, was fixed for the beginning of the persecution. At the first dawn of day, the magnificent church in that city

\* *Ecce, projicio vitem et cingulum, renuntio signis et militare recuso.*



(which was the residence of the emperor) was broken open, the copies of the Bible found in it were burned, and the whole church given up to plunder, and afterwards destroyed. The next day an edict was published to the following effect: "The assembling of the Christians, for the purpose of religious worship, is to be forbidden; the Christian churches are to be pulled down, and all copies of the Bible burned; those who hold places of honour and rank must either abjure the faith, or be degraded; in judicial proceedings the torture may be used against Christians, whatsoever their rank may be; those of the lower rank holding no official appointment are to be divested of their rights as citizens and freemen; and slaves, so long as they shall remain Christians, are to be incapable of receiving their freedom." To what extent Christians in humble life were to lose the enjoyment of their rights as freemen was not clearly defined, but free scope was left for applying the law to particular cases. It clearly appears from the edict by which the emperor Constantine afterwards annulled all the legal consequences of this persecution in the East, that in some instances freeborn Christians were made slaves, and put to the lowest and most degrading of servile employments, for which they were least suited by their former habits of life.\*

\* Euseb. vit. Constantin. l. II. c. 32 et seq. To obtain as full knowledge as possible of what this edict contained it is necessary to compare together both the two incomplete and inaccurate reports of it in Eusebius (Hist. Eccles. l. VIII. c. 2), and in the book "de Mortib.," and the translation of Rufinus. The prohibition of assemblies for religious worship is not indeed expressly mentioned in any one of these authors; but from the nature of the case it is tacitly implied by the edict itself. It is also clear, from the credible and official records of the first period of the persecutions in Proconsular Africa, that such a prohibition was positively expressed. The greatest obscurity is in the passage in Eusebius, the true meaning of which has occasioned no little dispute. *Τοὺς ἐν οἰκίαις εἰ ἔτι ἐπιμένουσιν ἐν τῇ τοῦ Χριστιανισμοῦ προθέσει, ἐλευθερίας στερεῖσθαι.* By *ἐν οἰκίαις* nothing else, according to the usage of the language, can be understood than men of the labouring class,—slaves. To give any meaning, therefore, to the passage, we must look round for some other interpretation of the word *ἐλευθερία* than that which first presents itself. By the phrase "deprived of their freedom," might be understood "thrown into chains and imprisoned." (See above, p. 192, the edict of Valerian against the Cæsarianos.) The safest course, however, is to follow Rufinus, who might have seen the original edict:—"Si quis servorum permansisset Christianus, libertatem consequi non posset." If this is right, the translation of Eusebius, it must be admitted, is very defective.

A Christian of noble rank suffered himself to be hurried by inconsiderate zeal into a violation of that precept of the gospel which enjoins respect towards all in authority. He publicly tore down the edict, and contemptuously tore it in pieces, exclaiming, "Behold, it is new victories over the Goths and Sarmatians that are posted up! The emperor treats the Christians, his own subjects, no better than if they were conquered Goths and Sarmatians." Welcome was the occasion thus furnished by the delinquent himself for condemning him to death, not as a Christian, but as one who had insulted the imperial majesty.

The impression produced by this edict must have been the more terrible from the fact of its being published in many of the provinces about the time, and in several districts on the very day, of the Easter festival.\* It is evident that the plan was totally to extirpate Christianity. There was something novel in the determination to deprive the Christians of their religious writings. It differed from the mode of proceeding in the former persecutions, in which it was hoped to suppress the sect by removing its teachers and guides. The importance of these documents, both for preserving and for propagating the Christian faith, must now have been understood. And there can be no doubt that the destruction of every copy of the Bible (had such a thing been possible) would have proved more effectual than the removal of those living witnesses of the faith, whose deaths did but serve to raise up many more

\* Eusebius and Rufinus place the publication of the edict in the month of March, which harmonizes well with its first publication at the imperial residence, Nicomedia. In Egypt, according to Coptic accounts, it was published on the first of Parmuthi, *i. e.*, by Ideler's tables, the 27th of March; which also harmonizes with the rest. See Zoëga Catalog. codd. Copt. Romæ, 1810, f. 25, of the fragments of the Coptic acta Martyrum, published by Georgi, Romæ, 1793, Præfat. 109, where Georgi proposes an unnecessary emendation, and other passages. When these Coptic accounts, however, which contain a good deal that is fabulous, represent the persecution as following immediately after the victory over the Persians, to express Dioclesian's thanks to the gods for the success of his arms, this must be an anachronism; unless the first persecution among the soldiers was confounded with this second one. What is stated in these Coptic records about the cause of the persecution,—viz., that a Christian metropolitan had released the son of the Persian king Sapor, who had been committed to him for safe keeping,—hardly admits of being reconciled in any way with the history as known to us.



to supply their place. On the other hand, the plan of destroying every existing copy of the scriptures, could it have been carried out, would have cut off the *very source* from which true Christianity and the very life of the church was continually springing with fresh and invincible energy. The preachers of the gospel, the bishops and clergy, might be executed; it was all to no purpose, so long as this book, by which new teachers could always be formed, remained in the hands of the Christians. The transmission of Christianity was not in itself, it is true, inseparably and necessarily connected with the letter of the scriptures. Written, not on tables of stone, but on the living tablets of the heart, the divine doctrine, once lodged in the human soul, could by its own divine power preserve and propagate itself for ever. But exposed to the manifold sources of corruption which exist in human nature, Christianity, without the well-spring of scripture to recur to and recover its purity, would, as all history teaches, have been quickly overwhelmed under a load of falsehoods and corruptions, and would soon have ceased to be any longer recognisable. But was it possible for the arrogant wilfulness of man actually to accomplish this cunningly devised plan for the suppression of Christianity? The arm of despotism might disregard all private rights, but could it reach so far as to grasp and destroy every copy of the scriptures, not only those which were deposited in the churches, but those also which existed in many a private dwelling? The kingdom of lies, true to its character, could indeed blindly imagine that nothing could escape its investigation, and that, by fire and sword, it could destroy what was protected by a higher power and providence. An infatuated zeal for the maintenance of the old religion was carried to such lengths by many, that they would fain have seen burnt with the holy scriptures of the Christians some of the noblest monuments of their own ancient literature. They were ready to have everything destroyed which could be used by Christians as a testimony against paganism, and as a means of transition to their own faith. They called for a law which should order the destruction of all the writings of antiquity which did such good service for the Christians.\* It is then

\* This is said by the North African writer Arnobius, who wrote in these times, in defence of Christianity, his *disputationes adversus gentes*.

easily conceivable that, where among the governors and provincial magistrates were found individuals of this stamp, or men who would sooner do too much than too little to gain the emperor's favour, the execution of this first edict for the surrender of the scriptures and the suspension of all assemblies for religious worship would of itself furnish occasion for the exercise of every species of oppression and cruelty upon the Christians, and the more especially as this edict rendered Christians of all ranks and conditions liable to the torture in judicial investigations.

But there were also magistrates of an entirely different temper. These endeavoured to soften, as far as possible, the rigour of these measures, and executed them with as much lenity as they could, without an open violation of the imperial edict. Not only did they willingly allow themselves to be deceived, but they even suggested means of evading the edict, by an apparent compliance with its requisitions. Mensurius, bishop of Carthage, had taken the precaution to remove all manuscripts of the Bible from the church at Carthage to his own house, as a place of greater security, leaving in their place certain writings of heretics. When the search-officers arrived, they seized the latter, asking no further questions. These, too, were religious writings of Christians,—and nothing was said in the edict as to what sacred writings were intended, nor of what Christian party. Certain senators at Carthage, however, exposed the artifice to Annulinus the proconsul, and advised him to cause search to be made in the house of the bishop, where the whole would be found. But the proconsul, —who, it should seem therefore, was willing to be deceived,—declined to follow the advice.\* When Secundus, a Numidian bishop, had refused to surrender the sacred scriptures, the officers of justice begged of him to give them then some useless fragments, or anything he pleased.† Such, very probably,

Lib. III. c. 7: Cum alios audiam mussitare indignanter et dicere: oportere, per Senatum aboleantur ut hæc scripta, quibus Christiana religio comprobetur et vetustatis opprimatur auctoritas. Arnobius remarks in objection to this proposal, Intercipere scripta et publicatam velle submergere lectionem, non est Deos defendere, sed veritatis testificationem timere.

\* Augustin. brevicul. collat. c. Donatistis, d. III. c. 13. Optat. Milev., ed du Pin, p. 174.

† Aliqua *ἐκβολὰς* aut quodcunque



may have been the meaning also of the proconsul's legate, when he repeatedly put the question to the Numidian bishop Felix, "Why will you not give up your superfluous writings?"\* So, too, the question of the prætorian prefect to Felix, the African bishop, "Why do you not surrender the sacred writings?—but perhaps you have none"—was evidently shaped with a view of suggesting the desired reply.†

This critical and trying period brought to light both good and evil in the great body of Christians. The weak faith, the false zeal of enthusiastic and excited feelings, and the true mean of genuine, evangelical good sense, were alike displayed in the different behaviour of men. Some yielded to the fear of torture and death, and gave up their copies of the Bible, which were immediately committed to the flames in the public market-place. These, who were designated afterwards by the name of *Traditores*, were removed from the communion of the church. Others,—and such instances were most frequent in North Africa, where a certain leaning to enthusiasm belonged to the native temperament,—challenged the pagan magistrates to do their office, and courted martyrdom with a fanatic zeal. Without being asked they boldly avowed that they were Christians, and possessed copies of the sacred scriptures, but that they would surrender them on no account. Others again disdainfully spurned the means of evasion which the humanity of the magistrates furnished them with. They refused to comply with the suggestions of those who, desirous of executing the imperial ordinance only in form, would have had them surrender other writings in the place of the Bible. They imagined that they ought to follow the example of Eleazer (ii. Maccab. vi.), who would not even *seem* to eat of the swine's flesh. Others again there were, who, either oppressed with debts, or conscious of grave transgressions, either wanted to rid themselves of a burdensome existence by an honourable and seemingly pious death, or sought in martyrdom an expiation of their sins; or who were ambitious of the honour which, in the cells of their prison, would be paid them by the brethren; or were greedy of the gifts which they might hope

\* *Quare scripturas non tradis supervacuas*, doubtless with intentional ambiguity; so that the words might be understood in the sense that all the sacred writings of the Christians were useless.

† See the *acta Felicis* in Ruinart.

to receive there.\* Among the bishops even there were individuals who approved of every mode of confessing the faith, and countenanced in others the same fanatic zeal by which they were themselves possessed. Others, however, endeavoured to unite to steadfastness in the faith, Christian prudence and sobriety,—and at the head of these was the bishop Mensurius, of Carthage. He would not consent to give the honour of martyrdom to those who had themselves invited the pagan magistrates to do their worst. In these opposite tendencies of the religious spirit we discern the germ of those divisions which, after peace from without had been once more restored, broke out within the bosom of the North-African church.

Let us now proceed to contemplate in detail some examples, which we have drawn from authentic sources, of the power of Christian faith and the intrepidity of Christian courage. In an inland town of Numidia a band of Christians, among whom was a boy of the tenderest age, were seized in the house of a church-reader, where they had assembled under the direction of a priest, for the purpose of reading the scriptures and celebrating the communion. They were brought to Carthage to be arraigned before the tribunal of the proconsul, singing hymns to the praise of God all the way. Several were put to the torture, for the purpose of extorting confessions from all. One in the midst of his sufferings cried out, “Ye do wrong, unhappy men; you lacerate the innocent. We are no murderers,—we have never defrauded any man. O God, have mercy on us! I thank Thee, O Lord,—give me strength to suffer in Thy name. Deliver Thy servants out of the bondage of this world—I thank Thee, and yet am unable to thank Thee—to glory! I thank the God of the kingdom. It appears,—the eternal, the incorruptible kingdom! Oh, Lord! Christ, we are Christians, we are Thy servants; Thou art our hope.” While he thus prayed, the proconsul said to him, “You should have obeyed the law of the emperor.” He replied, with

\* Vid. Augustin. brevicul. collat. c. Donatistis, d. III. c. 13, T. IX. opp. ed. Benedictin. f. 568: Quidam facinorosi arguebantur et fisci debitores, qui occasione persecutionis vel carere vellent onerosa multis debitis vita, vel purgare se putarent et quasi abluere facinora sua, vel certe adquirere pecuniam et in custodia deliciis perfrui. De obsequio Christianorum.



a strong spirit, though weak and exhausted in body, "I reverence no other law but that of God which I have learned. For this law I am willing to die. In this law I am made perfect. There is no other." In the midst of his tortures another cried out, "Help, O Christ! I pray Thee have pity on me—preserve my soul, and let it not be confounded. O give me power to suffer." When the reader in whose house the assembly was held was told by the proconsul, "You ought not to have received them," he replied, under the rack, "I could not do otherwise than receive my brethren." "But the emperor's command," said the proconsul, "should have been of more consequence to you." "God," he replied, "is greater than the emperor." "Have you in your house," demanded the proconsul, "any sacred writings?" "Such have I," he replied, "but they are in my heart." Among the prisoners was a Christian maiden, named Victoria, whose father and brother were still pagans. The brother, Fortunatianus, had come for the purpose of persuading her to renounce her religion, and thus procuring her release. When she steadfastly declared that she was a Christian, her brother pretended that she was not in her right mind. But said she, "*This is my mind*, and I have never altered it. Upon the proconsul asking her if she would not go with her brother, she replied, "No, for I am a Christian, and they are my brethren who obey God's commands." As to the lad, Hilarianus, the proconsul supposed he would be easily intimidated by threats; but even in the child the power of God proved mighty. "Do what you please," he replied; "I am a Christian."\*

The persecution once begun, it was impossible to stop half-way. The measures already adopted having failed of their object, it became necessary to take others. The first step of attacking the Christians was the most difficult; the second came easily and quickly. Certain occurrences, moreover, had happened, which tended to place the Christians in an unfavourable light, or which at least could easily be made use of

\* The sources are the *Acta Saturnini, Dativi et aliorum in Africa*. Baluz Miscell. T. II. Ruinart, in the above-cited collection of Du Pin. It is true the report has not been preserved in its simple, original form; but with an introduction, running remarks, and a conclusion, written by some Donatist. Yet the *acta proconsularia*, which form the groundwork, may still be easily recognised.

to such an end. A fire had broken out in the imperial palace of Nicomedia: it was quite natural to ascribe such an occurrence to the desire of revenge among the Christians,—and the accusation may even have had some grounds, without involving the whole Christian church in the disgrace. In so large a body as the Christians were, some might perhaps have allowed themselves to be seduced by passion, which they would palliate by the plea of religious zeal, into a forgetfulness of what manner of spirit became them as disciples of Christ. Certain it is, however, that this charge against the Christians was never substantiated. The sensitive author of the work on the Judgments which befel the Persecutors maintains that the fire was kindled by Galerius himself, to give him an opportunity for accusing the Christians,—a statement which on his unsupported authority cannot be received. The emperor Constantine ascribes the fire to lightning, and looks upon it as a judgment of God. The truth is, as Eusebius candidly admits, the real cause was never ascertained. Enough, however, that the Christians were accused of conspiring against the emperors, and multitudes of them thrown into prison, without distinction as to those who were or were not obnoxious to suspicion. The most cruel tortures were resorted to for the purpose of extorting a confession; but in vain. Many were burned to death, beheaded, or drowned. It is true that, fourteen days after the first, a second fire broke out, which, however, was extinguished without damage, a circumstance which strengthens the supposition that it was the work of an incendiary.\*

Some disturbances which, soon after this event, arose in Armenia and Syria, afforded new occasion of political jealousy against the Christians. The clergy, as the heads of the party, were particularly viewed with suspicion. Under this pretext an edict was issued, ordering all the clerical order to be seized and thrown into chains. Thus in a short time the prisons were filled with persons of this class. We have seen on various occasions, how strong was the inclination to fasten

\* Lactantius (*de mortib.*) relates this. It is mentioned by no other author. But Lactantius, who probably resided himself at that time at Nicomedia, would be more familiar with the particulars of these events than others. Yet it is possible he may have been deceived by some rumour then current in the city.



charges of a political character upon the Christians; nor were the Christians always as careful to avoid giving even apparent ground for such charges as their enemies were ready to bring against them. A young Christian from Egypt, who had been apprehended at Cæsarea in Palestine, being asked by the Roman proconsul, of what country he was, replied, "I am of Jerusalem, which lies towards the rising sun, the city of the saints." The Roman, who perhaps was not aware that such a place existed as the earthly Jerusalem, which probably was only known to him by its Roman name, *Ælia Capitolina*,—and who was still more ignorant of the heavenly Jerusalem,—immediately concluded that the Christians had founded somewhere in the East a city, which they intended to make the central point of a general insurrection. The matter appeared to him one of grave importance, and he proceeded to put many questions to the prisoner under torture.\* Procopius, a priest of Palestine, being called upon to sacrifice, declared that he knew of only one God, to whom men were bound to bring such offerings as he would accept. Being then required to offer his libation to the four sovereigns of the empire, the two Augusti and the two Cæsars, he made answer,—doubtless to show that men are bound to acknowledge but one God as their Lord,—in the words of the Homeric verse, "The government of many is not good; let there be one ruler, one king."† And this was construed into a political offence, as if he meant to censure the existing Tetrarchy.‡

All the prisons being now filled with Christians of the spiritual order, a new edict appeared, commanding that such of the prisoners as were willing to sacrifice should be set free, and that the rest should by every means be compelled to offer incense. This was followed at last, in 304, by a fourth and still more rigorous edict, which extended the same injunction to the whole body of Christians.§ In the cities where the edict was most strictly executed, public proclamation was made through the streets, that men, women, and children should all repair to the temples. Every individual was summoned by name from lists previously made out; at the city gates all were subjected to a rigid examination, and such as

\* Euseb. de martyrib. Palæstinæ, c. 9.

† Οὐκ ἀγαθὸν πολυκοιρανίη· εἴς κοίρανος ἔστω, εἰς Βασιλεὺς. Illias II. 204.

‡ Euseb. de martyrib. Palæst. c. 1.

§ L. c. c. 3.

were found to be Christians were immediately secured. At Alexandria the very pagans concealed the persecuted Christians in their houses, and many chose rather to lose both their property and their liberty, than to betray those who had taken refuge with them.\* *Sentence of death*, it is true, was not formally pronounced on the refractory, but it is only natural to suppose that an edict which authorized the employment of every means to compel the Christians to sacrifice, would, even more than an unconditional decree of death, expose them to every cruelty which the fanaticism of a governor, or his wish to court the imperial favour, might dispose him to inflict. Each one, there is no doubt, felt quite sure that he would never be called to account for any excesses he committed against the Christians. Already did the persecutors fondly imagine that their triumph over Christianity was sure. Already to the other honorary titles of the Augusti was added the glory of having extinguished the Christian superstition and restored the worship of the gods. "*Amplificato per orientem et occidentem imperio Romano, et nomine Christianorum deleto, qui rempublicam evertabant. Superstitione Christiana ubique deleta et cultu Deorum propagato.*" Yet at the very time they were thus triumphing, Providence was already preparing the circumstances which were destined to effect a change in the situation of the Christians.

One of the four rulers, Constantius Chlorus, who, with the title of Cæsar, held the government of Gaul, Britain, and Spain, possessed naturally a mild and humane disposition, averse to persecutions. He was moreover, though not himself a decided Christian, evidently favourably disposed towards Christianity and its professors; whether, as Eusebius affirms, because he really perceived the vanity of paganism, and without being a Christian was an upright monotheist,—or whether, as is more probable, he was, like Alexander Severus, an eclectic in religion. Those Christians about his person who continued steadfast in their faith he treated with special regard and confidence; it being a common remark with him, that one who has proved unfaithful to his God would be still less likely to remain faithful to his prince. The anecdote, however, which Eusebius gives of his putting their constancy to the proof, does not appear very probable. As he could

\* Athanas. Hist. Arianor. ad Monachos, s. 64.



not, as a Cæsar, openly disobey the edict that had been issued by the Augusti, he suffered some churches to be pulled down in order to save appearances. In Gaul, where he usually resided, the Christians enjoyed perfect liberty and repose, while the persecution was raging in other provinces.\* In Spain he may not have been able to effect so much; but it is certain that in no one of his provinces was the persecution of the same character as in other districts of the empire. The favourable disposition of this emperor to the Christians was soon able to befriend them more effectually, when, in 305, Dioclesian and Herculius having abdicated, he was elevated, in conjunction with Galerius, to the dignity of Augustus.

On the other hand there was now added to the line of the Cæsars a man who, in blind heathenish superstition and cruelty, perfectly resembled the emperor Galerius, who nominated him to that station. This was Caius Galerius Valerius Maximinus. It is natural to suppose that in the provinces committed to his care,—Syria, with the adjacent parts of the Roman empire, and Egypt,—the persecutions would be renewed with increased violence. At times, it is true, men grew weary of their own rage, when they saw that their efforts were to no purpose. The execution of the imperial edict flagged awhile, persecution slept, and the Christians enjoyed a temporary respite. But as soon as their enemies perceived that they were recovering breath, maddened to think they had not succeeded in extinguishing Christianity and restoring Paganism to its ancient splendour, their fury broke out afresh, and a new storm arose, more violent than ever. Thus, at length, in the year 308, and about the eighth year of the persecution, after much effusion of blood, which in the provinces governed by Maximinus had lasted from the time of his accession, a season of tranquillity had commenced. The Christians who had been condemned to labour in the mines were treated with greater lenity and forbearance. But all at once the Christians were startled out of their transient repose by a furious storm. A new and more rigorous com-

\* So says the work *De mortib. persecutor.* c. 16, and a letter of the Donatists to the Emperor Constantine, in which, on this very account, they demanded Gallic bishops for their judges. *Optat. Milev. de schismate, Donatistar.* l. 1. c. 22.

mand was addressed by the emperor to all the officers of his government, from the highest to the lowest, whether in the civil or in the military service, directing that the fallen temples of the gods should be restored, that all free men and women, all slaves, and even little children, should sacrifice and partake of what was offered at the altars of the gods. All provisions in the market were to be sprinkled with water or wine that had been used in the sacrifices, in order by this means to force the Christians into contact with idolatrous offerings—to such length did fanaticism and despotic power proceed! New tortures and fresh bloodshed were the consequences.

But again there was a season of respite, which lasted to the beginning of the year 310. Christians confined to the mines in Palestine were allowed to meet together for worship, but the governor of the province, having in one of his visitations observed this, reported it to the emperor. The prisoners were henceforth kept apart and put to severe labour. Thirty-nine confessors, who after much suffering were enjoying a season of rest, were beheaded at once. This was the last blood that flowed in this persecution, tranquillity having for some time been already restored to the Christians in the West. For the original instigator of the persecution, the emperor Galerius, being softened by a severe and painful disease, the consequence of his excesses, had perhaps been led to think that the God of the Christians might, after all, be a powerful being, who in his anger had punished him, and whose favour he must therefore endeavour to conciliate. At any rate he could hardly fail to be struck with the fact that all his bloody and violent proceedings had done no material injury to Christianity. At all events, in the year 311 appeared the remarkable edict which put an end to the sanguinary conflict of the Christian Church with the Roman empire.

It declared that it had been the intention of the emperors to bring back the Christians to the religion of their fathers, in departing from which they had invented laws according to their own fancy, and given birth to a multitude of sects. The reproach so frequently brought against the Christians of this age was repeated by the edict: "Behold, since you have left the unity of ancient tradition, the authority of the fathers, you have been led entirely by your own caprice, and have



fallen from one innovation into another ; hence the multitude of your sects.”\* But as the majority of the Christians, in spite of every measure to the contrary, persevered in their opinions, and it had now become evident that they could not consistently worship their own Deity, and at the same time pay homage to the gods, the emperors had resolved to extend to them their wonted clemency. They might once more be Christians, and would be allowed to hold their assemblies, provided only they did nothing contrary to the good order of the Roman state (*ita ut ne quid contra disciplinam agant*) ; † “let them now, therefore, after experiencing this proof of our indulgence, pray to their God for our prosperity, for the well-being of the state, and for their own ; that the state may, in all respects, continue to be well maintained, and they themselves may be enabled to live quietly in their own homes.”

*Attacks on Christianity. Defence of Christianity against these Writings.*

While the ancient world, in the hope of maintaining its own religious foundation, was endeavouring to suppress Christianity by force, the learning and civilization of the age enlisted itself in the same cause, and took up the contest with its writings. Intellectual weapons combined with physical violence in attacking the new principle which had begun to reveal its power on the principles of human conduct. In these literary attacks upon Christianity, the relation both of the religious and moral principles which then actuated society, and also of its several intellectual tendencies—such as we have already set them forth in the Introduction—to this new principle which was now entering the life of humanity, may be easily recognised. If He whose external manifestation was the perfectly unsullied mirror of his divine essence did not

\* The Latin words of the decree,—*Siquidem quadam ratione tanta eosdem Christianos voluntas* (such caprice *ἡμεροδραστηρία*), *invasisset et tanta stultitia occupasset, ut non illa veterum instituta sequerentur, quæ forsitan primi parentes eorundem constituerant; sed pro arbitrio suo atque ut hisdem erat libitum, ita sibi met leges facerent, quas observarent et per diversa vanos populos congregarent.*

† The emperor had probably explained himself more distinctly on this point in a rescript which has not come down to us.

fail to distinguish, in the judgments passed by his adversaries on his own person, the sins against the Son of Man from those against the Holy Ghost, we ought to feel it only the more incumbent on ourselves to apply a similar distinction to the judgments passed by misapprehension and calumny upon Christianity, where its divine life was manifested only under a variety of debasing admixtures. In the ferment which on its first appearance Christianity produced, many impure elements necessarily became blended with it, which were destined to be thrown off again during the purifying process of its development. The crisis brought on by Christianity, as it was to lead to a genuine health in the spiritual life, must needs call forth a considerable degree of morbid action, as the indispensable process by which that healthy condition was ultimately to be attained. Much that savoured of a jealous and narrow, exclusive spirit would naturally be engendered by that opposition to the world in which the new faith must first display itself before it could furnish the world with the principle of its own renovation. Now, in order to judge rightly of these impure admixtures, and of their relation to the essence of Christianity, and to discern the higher element which lay at the bottom of them, it was necessary that Christianity itself should be studied and understood in its fundamental character. Whoever contemplated these phenomena from an external point of view found himself, by the very peculiarity of his position, opposed to Christianity, and would naturally confound these accidents of its development with its essential principle, and mistake a knowledge of the former for a full comprehension of the latter. This remark we shall have occasion to apply to whatever in these centuries wears the form of opposition to Christianity.

Thus Lucian—of whose peculiar bias on religious matters we have already spoken—by dwelling on certain accidental marks which had caught his attention, could place Christianity in the same class with the various phenomena of fanaticism and boastful jugglery which he made the butt of his ridicule. When he heard of men who were said to possess the power of curing demoniacs, and of healing other diseases, he at once placed them on the same list with the common vagabond exorcists and magicians. He has most to say about the



Christians in a work which, written in his peculiar style, describes the life and self-inflicted death of the Cynic philosopher, Peregrinus Proteus. This personage, according to Lucian, was one of those notorious hypocrites who had the art of concealing their vanity and wickedness under the guise of a Cynic, and deluded the multitude by a variety of fraudulent tricks. It may, however, well be questioned how far, if at all, this picture, drawn by satire, answers to the truth, especially as we have a description of this individual by another contemporary,\* which, unless we can assume that the latter suffered himself to be imposed upon by a hypocritical show of moral earnestness and zeal, would lead us to form a very different view of his character. This Peregrinus then, as Lucian tells us, joined himself for a while to the Christians, and, being imprisoned for confessing Christianity, acquired the highest consideration among them. All which account may very probably be a pure invention on Lucian's part, for the purpose of connecting his hero with the Christians, and gaining thereby an excellent opportunity for satirizing the latter.

The importance which, from the Christian point of view, had been given to the personal existence of the individual, as destined for endless duration; the lively and confident faith in a resurrection to eternal life; the contrast to the whole frame of existing society which Christianity caused its followers to present; the hearty brotherly love which bound them to each other;—all these things Lucian acknowledges to be effects which had proceeded from the man who was crucified in Palestine. But, without troubling himself to seek

\* Aulus Gellius (in his *Noctes Atticæ*, l. XII. c. 11) tells us that while residing at Athens he visited this Peregrinus, who lived in a hut without the city. He calls him *virum gravem et constantem*. He cites from his mouth the maxim, Wickedness ought to be shunned, not from fear of punishment or disgrace, but only from love of goodness; *virum sapientem non peccatum, etiamsi peccasse eum dii atque homines ignoraturi forent*. If the longing after moral purity these words express was really his own, it is not difficult to see how he might be induced to attach himself to Christianity; while, at the same time, he may have soon fallen away from it, from an incapacity to bring himself to believe the facts which it announced. Still we do not think this probable, simply for the following reason, if there were no other—if anything of this kind had happened, some trace or other of such an occurrence would have been preserved in the religious traditions of this period.

for profounder reasons to account for effects so great, and, as he himself admits, so abiding, he at once proceeds to class it with the other kinds of fanaticism which he ridicules. "They," he says of the Christians, "still worship that great man who was crucified in Palestine, because it was he who introduced into human life the initiation into these new mysteries. These miserable creatures have persuaded themselves that they are all immortal, and will live for ever. For this reason they despise death itself, and many even give themselves up to it. But again, their first lawgiver \* has persuaded them to believe that, as soon as they have broken loose from the prevailing customs and denied the gods of Greece, reverencing in their stead their own crucified teacher, and living after his laws, they stand to each other in the relation of brethren. Thus they are led to hold everything else equally in contempt, to consider as profane whatever does not agree with their own notions, which, however, they have adopted without any sufficient warrant."† He makes use of the instance of Peregrinus to give a lively description of the sympathy which the Christians displayed to those confessors who were languishing in prison. "When he was incarcerated," says Lucian, "the Christians, who regarded it as a great calamity, spared no expense and no sacrifice to procure his liberation. Finding this to be impossible, they were extremely careful that he should be well provided for in every respect. From the early dawn, old women, widows, and orphans might be seen waiting at the doors of his prison; the more respectable among them, having bribed the keepers, slept near him in the dungeon. Then various dishes were brought in; and religious discourses were delivered in his presence.‡ Even from cities in Asia

\* We see no reason for supposing that St. Paul is intended by this expression; but we must understand by it the person whom he characterises as the ἀνεσκολοπισμένος σοφιστής, and of whose laws he is speaking,—the sole founder of Christianity. We recognise also the allusion to what Christ himself had said respecting brotherly love. In this particular description by Lucian we do not observe a single trait which can be considered as belonging peculiarly to the Apostle Paul.

† "Ἀνευ τινὸς ἀκριβοῦς πίστεως.

‡ Ecclesiastics visited him, and gave religious discourses in the cell where he was confined; unless the words "λόγοι ἱεροὶ αὐτῶν ἐλέγοντο" are to be understood as referring to extracts read from the sacred Scriptures. By the "ἐν σίλει," who remained with him during the night, may doubtless be meant also ecclesiastics.



Minor deputies from the Christian communities were sent to assist in protecting and consoling him. They show incredible despatch in a public concern of this sort. In a brief space they give away all they have."

And then Lucian goes on to accuse the Christians as an ignorant, uneducated class, of excessive credulity. On this account their charitable disposition was in many ways imposed upon. "If a magician or an impostor, who is at all skilful in his craft, comes among them, as he has only to deal with an ignorant set of people, he soon makes himself rich." He describes the Christians as men "who thought it the greatest sin to take a morsel of food which, according to their religious opinions, was forbidden, and who would rather do anything than that." Peregrinus, he says, was excluded from their community, "because he had *even* offended *against* their laws, for he had been seen to eat something or other which was forbidden among them." It is possible that Lucian had here in his eye certain communities of Jewish Christians; or, perhaps, the punctilious and superstitious observance of the regulations adopted by the apostolic council at Jerusalem (Acts xv.), which prevailed after the suppression of the more liberal spirit of St. Paul, may have given occasion to such a judgment. At all events, we cannot fail to perceive from this case how the narrow-minded views of certain believers led to a misapprehension of the essential character of their religion.

The stoic Arrian, who lived at a somewhat earlier period than Lucian, judged of the Christians—as the emperor Marcus Aurelius had done before—quite in accordance with the relation in which the stoical philosophy stood to Christianity. In his work which has for its object the elucidation of the principles of his master Epictetus,\* he starts the question, "Whether, by the reason gaining an insight into the laws which govern the universe, it might not be possible to attain to the same intrepidity in the presence of death which the Galilæans gained by habit and a mad fanaticism."

From what we have already said on the relation of Neo-Platonism, both to the religious development of the ancient world and also to Christianity, it will be easily understood that, while on the one hand it might serve as a passage to the latter, and also furnish the source from which Christian truth

\* Diatrib. l. IV. c. 7.

might borrow the scientific form for its exposition and defence, so, on the other, it would be the school from which its most formidable antagonist would proceed. It was perhaps from this school that came the first man who felt sufficiently interested in the subject to attack Christianity in an express work. Celsus, who, when in the reign of Marcus Aurelius the attempt was made to extirpate Christianity by the sword, attacked it at the same time with the weapons of his witty and acute intellect, was not improbably a Neo-Platonist. He wrote against the Christians a work in two books, entitled "The true doctrine."\*

Origen himself, however, started the conjecture, that this

\* Λόγος ἀληθής, Orig. c. Cels. l. I. c. 4. Several learned writers have supposed that Origen's language (c. Cels. l. IV. c. 36) favoured the inference that Celsus wrote another work, in two books, against Christianity besides the work just mentioned, which, as to its essential contents, may be restored from the fragments which are preserved in Origen's reply. But we cannot think that the interpretation of the passage which lies at the basis of their theory is the correct one. The passage is this: 'Ο Ἐπικούρειος Κίλσος, εἶγε οὗτός ἐστι, καὶ κατὰ Χριστιανῶν ἄλλα δύο βιβλία συντάξας. I cannot understand ἄλλα, in this connection, as referring to other works against Christianity, besides the one of which alone Origen uniformly speaks, and which it is his business to refute; but I understand by it other works besides those known to belong to Celsus, in which he betrays his Epicureanism without any attempt at concealment. "The Epicurean Celsus, if indeed"—so I consider myself warranted by the Greek usus loquendi of this period to understand the word εἶγε, while at the same time I acknowledge the *original* difference between εἶγε and εἴπερ—"if indeed he is the same with the one who wrote two other books against the Christians." By the other books, in this case, none can be meant but that one work which Origen undertook to refute. Precisely this was the point in question, whether the *Epicurean* could be the author of *that work*. Whether the same individual had composed two other works besides, against Christianity, was a question that did not belong here. Had it been Origen's intention to designate two books distinct from that work, he would have expressed himself somewhat as follows: 'Ο καὶ ταῦτα τὰ βιβλία καὶ ἄλλα δύο, etc. Moreover, the prefixing the words κατὰ Χριστιανῶν confirms my interpretation. And if Celsus had written another additional work against the Christians, two cases only can be supposed. Either Origen had read this work also, or else he had merely been informed that Celsus had written such a work, without having seen it himself. In the first case, he would not have failed to take some notice, in this controversy, of what Celsus had said in his other work against the Christians. In the second case, he would, at least, not have omitted to declare distinctly that the other work of Celsus had never come under his eye, as he does in fact observe where he is speaking of a writing of Celsus which we shall have occasion to mention hereafter.



Celsus was no other than the person otherwise known as Celsus the Epicurean, Lucian's contemporary and friend. Still it is plain, from the uncertainty with which he expresses himself, that he was led to this conjecture, not by any evidence of historical tradition, but only by the identity of the name; and that he was again thrown into doubt by the internal evidence of the work itself. Now, since it is by no means impossible that two authors of the same name should write at the same period—especially when the name is not an unusual one—the inference from the identity of names must be extremely uncertain, unless confirmed also by some similarity in the way of thinking.

Lucian was induced by the last-mentioned Celsus to publish his life of the magician Alexander of Abonoteichus, a work which he dedicated to that friend. This fact is quite in agreement with the sentiments of Celsus, as discoverable from his work against Christianity. For the antagonist of Christianity placed it in the same class with all the phenomena of magic, and made use of this supposed resemblance to account for its origin and diffusion. He might naturally wish, also, to know more about the great magician who had made so much noise in his day, with a view to avail himself of this knowledge to advance that would-be *enlightenment* which looks down with equal contempt upon all religious phenomena which claim to be beyond the ordinary standard as belonging to the same class. This Celsus had written a book, as Origen also was aware, against pretended enchantments,\* and which was intended to counteract the fraudulent tricks of those vagrant Goetæ. It is described by Lucian as a work well adapted to lead men back to sober sense.† Now it is possible that in his case the same zeal against fanaticism would induce Celsus to write against those who endeavoured to deceive the multitude by their pretended art of magic, and against the Christians who insisted on their own miraculous gifts. Celsus does, in fact, compare, in one place, the miracles of Christ with the works of magicians who had learned their art from

\* Κατὰ μάγων.

† He says in his tract dedicated to this Celsus, and entitled 'Αλιζανδρος or Φενδομάντις (s. 12), addressing himself to Celsus: Οἷς κατὰ μάγων συνέγραψας, καλλίστοις τε ἅμα καὶ ὠφελιμωτάτοις συγγράμμασι καὶ δυνάμειν σωφρονίζειν τοὺς ἐντυγχάνοντας.

the Egyptians, and for a few oboli exhibited them in the open market-place, pretending to expel evil spirits from men, to drive away diseases by a breath, to call up the souls of heroes, to raise by their spells splendid entertainments, to make dead things move as if they were alive; and he asks, "Shall we, because they do such things, consider them as sons of God—or shall we say that these are the tricks of wicked and pitiable men?"\* Origen was doubtless wrong in supposing that by these words Celsus granted the reality of magic, and that therefore the only way to reconcile this concession with the attack on magic by the same Celsus (if he were the same) was to assume that, to serve some particular end, he here pretended a belief which he did not actually entertain. For Celsus might express himself thus, even though he looked upon those magicians as being no better than jugglers, skilful in deceiving the senses by a certain sleight of hand,† and yet be the same writer who in his work against the magicians undertook to show *how* such deceptions were accomplished. Yet it must be admitted that, in another passage of the work against the Christians, Celsus does speak as if he considered magic to be an art possessed of a certain power, though he himself held it in no great account.‡ He observes that he had heard from Dionysius, an Egyptian musician, that magic exercised an influence over uneducated and degraded men, but not over those who had received a philosophical education. This view of magic may be easily traced to an opinion prevalent among the Platonists of the period, which asserted that by taking advantage of certain attractive and repulsive powers in nature—certain magnetic influences—it would be possible to exercise a control over such as were still fettered by the bonds of nature, though not over those who had risen to freedom, and were living in the divine element which is exalted above all the forces of nature. With this opinion the assertion first quoted from Celsus may be easily reconciled, that magic, as practised in Egypt its proper home,§ so influenced

\* Orig. c. Cels. l. I. c. 28.

† Μέχρι φαντασίας φαινόμενα τοιαῦτα.

‡ c. Cels. l. VI. c. 41.

§ And so the possession of the art of magic was ascribed, by those who acknowledged its reality, particularly to the Egyptian priests. Moreover, Celsus (l. I. c. 28) brings forward the story, borrowed perhaps from the Jews, that Jesus, on account of his poverty, was obliged in



men at a subordinate stage of culture, that sights and affections of whatever kind might be produced in them at pleasure. It may be questioned, however, whether Lucian's friend would have conceded as much to magic.

Lucian praises the mild temper and moderation of his friend. But in Celsus' work against the Christians we can discover no traces of such qualities, but we feel that we have to do with a man of vehement passions, a man altogether incapable of allowing a cause which he attacks to be right in any respect or degree. At the same time we cannot be certain that Lucian's opinion of his friend was according to truth. Besides, there are those who have no difficulty in preserving their temper so long as certain topics are not introduced, but the mere mention of which will make them break out at once into fire and flames. And in religious matters especially it often happens that men who from a certain negative enlightenment strongly condemn all extravagant zeal in the intellectual domain, nevertheless lose all their calmness and moderation when important questions of religious interest come before them. The heat with which Celsus attacks Christianity betrays his strong sense of the mighty power with which it was extending itself on all sides.

There can be no doubt that the Celsus who was Lucian's friend favoured for the most part the school of Epicurus. But in the work against Christianity very little is discoverable that betrays a tendency to this way of thinking, and even this little vanishes under a more careful examination. On the other hand, the traces of an entirely opposite system are everywhere apparent.

In this book we recognise the impress of a mind which would not consent to adopt the system of another; we find ourselves in contact with a man who, by combining the ideas predominant in the general philosophical consciousness of his time—the popular ideas, so to speak, of the period—had framed a system of his own, of which he felt rather proud,

Egypt to let himself out for wages, and there learned the arts by which he performed his pretended miracles, and contrived to attain to such eminence as to be worshipped as a divine being. "Ὅτι οὗτος διὰ πηνίαν εἰς Αἴγυπτον μισθαργήσας, καὶ κατ' ἐνέργειαν τινων πειραθεὶς, ἐφ' αἷς Αἰγύπτιοι σεμνύονται, ἐπανήλθεν, ἐν ταῖς δυνάμεσι μέγα φρονῶν καὶ δι' αὐτὰς θεὸν αὐτῶν ἀνηγόρευσεν.

and which, as in his work against the Christians he had appeared only in a controversial and negative light, it was his intention to unfold in another performance in a positive form. In this second work he meant to show how it would be necessary for those to live who were willing and able to follow him. Whether this plan was ever carried into effect we are not informed.\*

But now in this system the main ideas are borrowed from Platonism. Among these we reckon the idea of the Absolute, the *ὄν*, to which the contemplative spirit of the philosopher alone could soar;—the distinction between the highest primal Being or Essence, and his self-manifestation in the Universe—between the Highest, who reposes in being, and the second god who reveals himself in becoming;—the world, as the Son of the Supreme God;—the idea of the celestial luminaries as divine essences, of higher intelligences animating those heavenly bodies, of the gods who appear visibly in the phenomenal world,† as opposed to the invisible, hidden deities who preside over the several parts of the world—the national gods to whom the different portions of the world are subject, and to whom men are bound to render due homage, by acknowledging this dependence, which is grounded on the nature of terrestrial existence; the idea that the imperishable element in human nature, the spirit, alone derives its origin from God; that this element, possessing an affinity to God, exists in the human soul; the hypothesis of a power struggling against the divine and formative principle in the world, of the *ὑλη*, as the source of evil; so that the evil in the world is regarded as something necessary; and, lastly, that from this *ὑλη* are derived the evil spirits, the powers that resist the divine, the reason.

These ideas, scattered through his work, bespeak certainly not the Epicurean, but one who owed nearly all he possessed to the current ideas of the Neo-Platonic philosophy of religion. Even though we must suppose that, in order to oppose the Christian mode of thinking, and for the purpose of

\* Origen, at the conclusion of his work, begs his friend Ambrosius, if Celsus had actually fulfilled this design, to procure for him this work also, that he might take measures for its refutation. These words clearly prove that Origen, too, had no knowledge of a second work of Celsus against Christianity.

† Θεοὶ φανεροί.



bantering the Christians, Celsus said many things which he did not seriously mean, yet assuredly we have no reason to infer that the hue of Platonism which tinges the whole work was thrown in merely for the sake of illusion. And however strong we may be inclined to rate the tendency to eclecticism at this particular period, still we cannot look upon it as either natural or probable that Epicurean views would be blended with so predominant an element of New Platonism.

But whoever this Celsus may have been, he is an important individual in our history, for he is, in fact, the original representative of a class of intellects which, in the various attacks on Christianity, has over and over again presented itself to our notice: wit and acuteness, without earnestness of purpose or depth of research; a worldly understanding that looks at things merely on the surface, and delights in hunting up difficulties and contradictions. His objections against Christianity serve one important end. They present, in the clearest light, the true opposition between the Christian position and that of the ancient world; and, in general, the relation which revealed religion will ever be found to hold to the ground assumed by natural reason. Thus it is that many of his objections and strictures became nothing less than testimonies to the truth.

In what light the divine foolishness of the gospel—of the faith which was to make the highest truth the common property of all mankind—must needs appear to the twinkling wisdom and the aristocratic enlightenment of the ancient world, will clearly appear from the words of Celsus, where he objects to the Christians\* that they refused to give reasons for what they believed, but were ever repeating, “Do not examine, only believe; thy faith will make thee blessed. Wisdom is a bad thing in life, foolishness is good.”† He makes the Christians say, “Let no educated, no wise man approach; but whoever is ignorant, uneducated—whoever is

\* A similar objection is also brought against Judaism and Christianity by Galen, that celebrated physician of the second and third centuries,—a man incapable of rising to the higher fields of thought. Contemplating the world from one particular side of it, and by the understanding alone, he is led to observe, “*ἵνα μὴ τις εὐθὺς κατ’ ἀρχαῖς ὡς εἰς Μωϋσοῦ καὶ Χριστοῦ διατριβὴν ἀφιγμένους νόμων ἀναποδείκτων ἀκούῃ.*” De different. puls. l. II. c. 4.

† L. I. c. 9.

like a child, let him come and be comforted.”\* This objection was, in part, called forth by the divine paradox of the gospel itself; but in part there was also among the Christians themselves a one-sided tendency to set up faith as something opposed to learned culture and scientific inquiry—a course which led to a misapprehension of Christianity itself, and to accusations which had no other ground than this misconception. Associated with this class of objections we find another of a directly opposite character, showing how much the religion which was thus accused of demanding and encouraging implicit faith claimed and excited intellectual inquiry, and called into requisition all the powers of thought. We are alluding to the objection which Celsus drew from the multitude of conflicting sects among the Christians.† “In the beginning,” he says,‡ “when the Christians were few in number, they may, perhaps, have agreed among themselves. But as their numbers increased, they separated into parties, mutually attacking and refuting each other, and retaining nothing in common but their name, if indeed they did that.”§ He accuses them also of calumniating each other, and of refusing to yield up a single point for the sake of unanimity. ||

In objecting to Christianity the many oppositions of human opinion which it called forth, Celsus is, in fact, refuting himself. How could a religion of bare faith, a religion that invited the unenlightened but repelled the wise of this world, give birth to such a multitude of heresies? If he had been a less superficial observer, he could not have failed to be struck with this contradiction; and in endeavouring to resolve it must have had his attention directed to that peculiarity by which Christianity is so clearly distinguished from all preceding phenomena in the intellectual world. Celsus thought that

\* L. III. c. 44: Δῆλοί εἰσιν, ὅτι μόνους τοὺς ἡλιθίους καὶ ἀγενεῖς καὶ ἀναίσθητους καὶ ἀνορθόπους καὶ γύναια καὶ παιδάσια πείθειν ἐθέλουσι τε καὶ δύνανται.

† Clement of Alexandria observes that pagans and Jews were wont to bring this objection against Christianity: μὴ δὲν πιστεύειν διὰ τὴν διαφωνίαν τῶν αἰρέσεων. Strom. I. VII. f. 753. Ed. Paris, 1641.

‡ L. III. c. 10, and the following.

§ Στάσεις ἰδίας ἔχιν ἕκαστοι θέλουσι, σφᾶς αὐτοὺς ἐλέγχουσιν, ἑνός, ὡς εἰπῶν, ἔτι κοινωνοῦντες, εἴγε κοινωνοῦσιν ἔτι, τοῦ ὀνόματος.

|| L. V. c. 63: Βλασφημοῦσι δὲ εἰς ἀλλήλους οὗτοι πάνθ' ὅσα ῥητὰ καὶ ἄρρητα καὶ οὐκ ἂν εἴποιεν οὐδὲ καὶ ὅτις τιν εἰς ἐλπίσιν.



these oppositions of knowledge, so hotly conflicting with each other, would bring about the dissolution of Christianity. But history has proved the contrary. It has shown that there is in Christianity an indwelling power of unity which enabled it to overcome all opposition, and to make it even subservient to its advancement.

Celsus then, as we see, was aware of the fact that many different sects existed among the Christians. But he did not, as a lover of justice and of truth would have done, give himself the trouble to distinguish the original fundamental doctrines of Christianity from the later additions made by these sects—what was acknowledged as true by the great body of Christians, from what was adopted only by this or that particular party. He was somewhat deeply read in the religious records of the Christians, and had also heard much that was derived from them. But the temper in which he had read and heard all this was such as disqualified him for rightly understanding it. In all he did but seek and find occasion for ridicule and misrepresentation. As he had put the religious parties of the Christians without discrimination into one class, so he classed together their sacred writings without examining either their origin or their character. Whatever he could lay hold of which seemed likely to present Christianity in an unfavourable light, though it came from the most opposite sources—whether from the fanatical spiritualism of the Gnostics, or the gross anthropomorphism of the Chiliasts—was eagerly welcomed by him.

At one time he objects to the Christians that they had nothing in common with all other religions—neither temples, images, nor altars; at another—opposing an abstract knowledge of God to the religion that had its birth in historical facts—he calls them a miserable, sense-bound, sense-loving race,\* who would acknowledge nothing but what was palpable to the outward senses. He declaims at length on the duty of closing the senses and turning away from all sensible things, in order to gain an intuition of God through the eye of the mind.

On the watch for every weak point which the Christians might leave exposed, and which, in assailing their faith, he

\* Δειλὸν καὶ φιλοσώματον γένος. L. VII. c. 36. Παντελῶς τῇ σαρκὶ ἐδιδέ-  
μεινοι καὶ μηδὲν καθαρόν βλέποντες. L. c. c. 42.

could take advantage of, the pains expended by many to work into form the traditions relating to the history of Christ did not escape his notice. "Many," he says, "of the faithful, who have come, as it were, out of a fit of intoxication to their sober senses, alter the evangelical narrative from the shape in which it was first promulgated, in three, four, nay many ways, that they may be able to get rid of whatever was open to objection."\* He brings this forward as a proof of his position, that the more soberminded and discreet among the Christians were aware of the insuperable difficulties which were involved in those accounts, and, consequently, felt themselves called upon to remove these difficulties by emendations of the text. But even this fact is a witness to the intrinsic energy which had enabled these facts to find their way into the religious consciousness. Notwithstanding the stones of stumbling that they presented to man's ordinary understanding, still, when these narratives came to be spread among men of education and cultivated intellects, they could win conviction on their side.

In like manner Celsus unintentionally bears witness to the distinguishing peculiarity of the gospel, and at the same time to the cause of his own insensibility to its power, when he imagines that he can justly ridicule Christianity, because it invites none but sinners to the kingdom of God, and excludes such as are wholly without sin. "They who invite us," he says,† "to be initiated in the mysteries of other religions, begin by proclaiming 'Let him draw near who is pure from all stains, who is conscious of no wickedness, who has lived a good and upright life.' This is their proclamation who promise purification from sins. But let us hear the invitation of these Christians: 'Whoever is a sinner,' they cry, 'whoever

\* The remarkable words of Celsus (l. II. c. 27) are, *Τινὰς τῶν πιστευόντων ὡς ἐκ μίθης ἤκοντας εἰς τὸ ἐφιστάσθαι αὐτοῖς μεταχειράττειν ἐκ τῆς πρώτης γραφῆς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τριχῇ καὶ τετραχῇ καὶ πολλαχῇ καὶ μεταλλάττειν, ἵν' ἔχουσι πρὸς τοὺς ἐλέγχους ἀρνῆσθαι.* Origen supposes that what Celsus says can apply only to the Gnostics, who allowed themselves in the practice of altering the evangelical records in order to suit them to their own peculiar doctrines. Celsus, however, could hardly have in view this class of men; more probably he referred to those who, in their criticism of the text, being pressed by some apologetical interest, were for removing whatever might prove offensive to the *sensus communis*.

† Lib. III. c. 59.



is foolish, unlettered, in a word, whoever is wretched, him will the kingdom of God receive.' ” And then he demands, “What then? Was Christ not sent to those who are sinless?”\* As Celsus had no just sense of the nature of sin, and could accordingly express surprise that Christ should announce himself as not sent especially for the sinless, so too he had no presentiment of the soul-transforming power which Christianity possesses—of that mystery of an entire moral regeneration of a nature wholly estranged from God, which Christ sets forth in his conversation with Nicodemus. He had no conception of the fact, that by the power of divine love a change is produced, beginning from within and working outwards, which no fear of punishment could ever effect from without. His remarks on this subject are well worth notice.† “It is manifest that no man can entirely change a person to whom sin has become a second nature, even by punishment, *and far less then by mercy*; for to effect a complete *change of nature is the most difficult of things*. The sinless are the safest companions in life.”

It is evident that, with such a habit of thinking as could give utterance to the preceding passages, Celsus would be incapable of understanding another of the characteristic marks of the Christian position as distinguished from that of antiquity, namely, the nature of humility. In virtue of his Platonism, he did, indeed, see that the *ταπεινότης*, which the ordinary ethical views of antiquity looked down upon as something sordid and evil, might also be a virtue; and hence he refers to the passage in Plato's fourth book of the *Laws*, which we have already cited (see page 26). Instead however of seeing in the latter something typical and preparatory of Christianity, he derives the Christian idea of humility from a misunderstanding of the Platonic sentiment.‡ The true nature of humility was a matter too foreign to his own way of thinking and apprehension, to make it easy for him to understand this particular of the Christian life. Thus, in those caricatures of humility which came under his observation in certain imperfect exhibitions of the Christian life, he was unable to discern the truth at bottom; and he took advantage of such

\* Τί δὲ; τοῖς ἀναμαρτήτοις οὐκ ἐπέμψθη; L. c. c. 62.

† Οὐδεὶς ἂν οὐδὲ κολάζων πάντῃ μεταβάλοι, μήτι γε ἐλεῶν. L. III. c. 65.

‡ Παράκουσμα τῶν Πλάτωνος λόγων. L. VI. c. 15.

morbid offshoots to represent the essence of Christian humility as itself being a morbid thing. According to him, the humble man after the Christian model was a creature "for ever on his knees, or rolling in the dust, always meanly dressed and covered with ashes."\*

It may appear strange that Celsus, who taunts the Christians with their self-abasement before God, should almost with the very same breath accuse them of the very opposite fault, immoderate pride, a foolish self-exaltation in the sight of God. But as he had no proper conception of true humility, so neither had he any just notion of true dignity,—both being intimately connected together in the Christian consciousness, according to the words of Christ, who makes self-humiliation the condition of man's exaltation. To the sentiments of the natural man these appear as incompatible; but in Christianity they find an easy reconciliation. Hence Celsus necessarily mistook the Christian position on both its sides. He could therefore attack it on both these opposite aspects. Thus he ridicules the Christians for presuming to ascribe to themselves, and to *man* generally, in the sight of God, such worth and dignity above the rest of creation, as to teach that God had created all things on man's account, and to represent man as the final cause both of creation and of providence. The importance which Christianity attached to the individual struck him as strange and singular. Agreeably to the prevailing view of the ancient world, he regarded the *universal whole* as being the only end worthy of the divine mind; and that man was of no account except as a constituent part of this whole, which is subjected to those unchangeable laws of its evolution which operate with iron necessity. "It is not for man," he says, "that everything has been given; but everything comes into being and decays again for the sake of the whole."† How little capable he was of understanding, indeed, the great idea that all things have been created for man, is evident from the form of some

\* L. VI. c. 15. Origen justly replies, "If there are some who through ignorance and the want of a right understanding of the true doctrine of humility do this, the Christian system is not therefore to be accused; but it must be charitably imputed to the ignorance of those who propose to do what is right, but fail for want of knowledge."

† "Ἐκαστα τῆς τοῦ ὅλου σωτηρίας ἕνεκα γίνεται τε καὶ ἀπόλλυται. L. IV. c. 69.



of his objections. "Although," he says, "it might be said that trees, plants, herbs grow for the sake of man, yet might it not be said with the same propriety that they also grow for the wildest animals?"\* And comparing the latter with man, he observes †—"We with the greatest labour and care are scarcely able to support ourselves; but for the brutes everything grows spontaneously, without any sowing and ploughing of theirs." In his passionate prejudice against all that Christianity teaches of the dignity of human nature, he goes so far as to exalt the brutes at man's expense. ‡ "If you say God has given you the power of capturing the brutes, and of making them subservient to your ends, we reply, that before cities, arts, trades, and weapons had existence, men were torn by the wild beasts, not they taken by men." Instead of marking how in the brutes nature is gradually ascending to man, he adduces the instances of bees and the ants to prove that even the order of civil society is no peculiar prerogative of man.§ What the Christians taught concerning a particular providence, and concerning God's care for the well-being of individuals, appeared, therefore, to him a vain presumption, derived from the ascription of human feeling to the Deity. "Not for man," he asserts, || "any more than for lions or eagles, have all things in the world been created: but it was in order that the world, as the work of God, might be a complete and perfect whole. God provides only for the whole; and this his providence never neglects. And this world never becomes any worse. God does not desert it for a while and then return to it after a long interval. He is as little angry with man as he is with apes or flies." Like a consistent Platonist, Celsus rejects every thing *teleological* in the creation and government of the world. A redemption is, according to his doctrine, wholly out of the question. For in this world evil is a necessary thing. It has no origin, and will have no end. It remains constantly as it

\* L. c. c. 75.

† L. c. c. 76.

‡ To avoid the mistake of many who have supposed they found in what Celsus here says a token of his leaning far more to Epicureanism than Platonism in his mode of thinking, it should be considered that passion and obstinacy lead him here to push things to the extreme, and that, even according to the Neo-Platonistic principles, the brutes were supposed to possess a soul bearing some affinity to that of man, but checked in its development by the constraint of the *λογος*.

§ L. c. c. 81.

|| L. IV. c. 99.

is, just as the nature of the universe remains on the whole the same for ever.\* The *ἔλγ* is the source from which what we call evil is ever springing up afresh. By this Platonic principle, a redemption which should triumph over evil is excluded. Celsus conceives the evolution of the universe as a circle constantly repeating itself in invariable obedience to the same laws. With such notions of God's relation to the world, and to man in particular, with such mistaken views of the worth and significance of personal existence, it was only natural for him to bring against the Christian view of God's government of the world, and of his method of salvation, and especially of the work of redemption, the objection so often repeated in after times, "that the universe has been provided, once for all, with all the powers necessary for its preservation and for its development in accordance with certain fixed laws. God did not, like a human architect, so execute his work, that at some future period it would need repair.†

Quite characteristic of the man is the way in which Celsus treats the history of Christ. He partly follows the stories put in circulation by the Jews; partly certain spurious or mistaken traditions; and partly the gospel narratives themselves, which, as a whole, because he possessed no general intuition of Christ's person, he could not understand in their true significance.‡ Wherever he thinks the evangelical narratives can be made to answer his purpose, he adduces their authority to be unimpeachable; but when they do not square and fall in with his polemical objects, he denies their truth.§ He makes the Jew, whom he introduces speaking against Christianity, to say that he had many truths to relate of Christ's history altogether different from what his disciples had reported, but that he purposely kept them back.|| And yet it is hardly conceivable that Celsus, who, full of hatred of Christianity, raked together whatever could be urged against it with the least semblance of probability, would have failed to make use of such accounts if they were really within his reach. We,

\* L. c. c. 62, and the following.

† Οὐτε τῷ θεῷ καινοτέρας δι' διοξάσεως. L. c. c. 69.

‡ Origen aptly characterizes the sources of information of which Celsus availed himself: Εἴτ' ἐκ παραποιουμένων, εἴτε καὶ ἐξ ἀναγνώσμάτων, εἴτ' ἐκ διηγημάτων Ἰουδαίων. L. II. c. 10.

§ L. c. c. 34.

|| L. c. c. 13.



therefore, with Origen, must consider this as one of those rhetorical artifices, in the use of which Celsus set an example to later antagonists of Christianity.

Thus, he assails the position that Christ was wholly without sin; \* although he does not produce a single action of Christ to show the contrary.

Among other stories, he lays hold of the wholly unfounded tradition of the uncomeliness of Christ's person,† in order to represent it as inconsistent with the supposition that Christ partook of the divine nature more largely than other men.‡

With regard to the resurrection of Christ, he did not venture to deny the reality of his death; but he denied the truth of the statements of his appearance after he had risen. Without entering into a careful examination of these accounts, he leaves it open to his readers either to suppose them pure inventions, or cases of optical delusion—visions belonging to the same class with the apparition of ghosts. § The objections which Celsus urges against the reality of Christ's miracles and of his resurrection, harmonize perfectly with his ignorance of the true significance of these facts. "Why," he demands, "did Christ perform no miracle when in the temple the Jews challenged him to do so?" || "If he really wished to manifest his divine power, he ought to have shown it to his enemies, to those who condemned him, and generally to all." ¶ How, from overlooking the connection of the divine with the human in history, he has constantly to contradict himself, appears once more in a very remarkable manner, by his saying, "How is it that a *man* who was incensed with the Jews could destroy them at a stroke, and give up their city to the flames!—so utterly nothing were they before him;—and yet the great God, angry and threatening, sends his own son, as they say, and he must suffer all this?" \*\*

Thus, to the man who was incapable of understanding the

\* Μηδὲ ἀνεπίληπτον γεγονέναι τὸν Ἰησοῦν. L. c. c. 41 and 42.

† Which tradition had grown out of an exaggeration of the truth that Christ had appeared in the form of a servant, and out of a literal interpretation of Isaiah 53.

‡ Ἀμύχανον, ὅτῳ θεῖόν τι πλέον τῶν ἄλλων προσῆν μηδὲν ἄλλου διαβέβαιον τοῦτο δὲ οὐδὲν ἄλλου διέφερον, ἀλλ' ὡς φασι μικρὸν καὶ δυσεῖδες καὶ ἀγενεῖς ἦν. L. IV. c. 75.

§ L. II. c. 55; I. VII. c. 35.

¶ L. II. c. 63 and 67.

|| L. I. c. 67.

\*\* L. IV. c. 73.

true import of Christ's appearance, the course of history generally became unintelligible. He could not read the signs of the times. He could not perceive that men whose anger the Jews had provoked served as instruments of the divine justice in inflicting the penalty which that people had incurred by the accumulated measure of their guilt.

From the same school of Platonism proceeded, in the latter half of the third century, another opponent of Christianity,—one in whom we recognise a man of noble spirit united with profound intellectual attainments, the very reverse of Celsus. Porphyry, a Phœnician by birth, was a man of the East, in whose character an Oriental basis had been completely fused with the elements of Grecian civilization. The statement which comes from Socrates the church historian,\* that he had originally been a Christian, but had been embittered against Christianity in consequence of having suffered ill treatment from some of his fellow-believers, looks too much like one of the common stories by which men endeavour to account, from outward causes, for an opposition grounded in the inward bias of the mind itself. It scarcely, therefore, deserves any credit. In no one sentiment that properly belongs to Porphyry can a trace be discovered of his having ever been a Christian; for, assuredly, those ideas of his which are, or rather which seem to be, akin to Christianity, cannot rightly be considered as an evidence of this kind. In part, they sprang naturally out of that portion of Platonism which may justly claim some affinity with Christian doctrines, and which was brought out more prominently by the effort to refine paganism and to maintain it in opposition to Christianity. Partly they are proofs of the power which Christianity exerted over those minds even that were opposed to it; as, for instance, when Porphyry describes the triad of Christian principles, Faith, Love, and Hope—though not apprehended in all the profound meaning of St. Paul—as the foundation of genuine piety.† If Porphyry had not been a disciple of Plotinus, it is probable that by a fusion of Oriental Theosophy with Christianity he would have become a Gnostic. That speculative direction, opposed

\* L. III. c. 23.

† In his letter to his wife, Marcella, which was published by Mai, in Milan, 1816 (c. 24): Τέσσαρα στοιχεῖα μάλιστα κεκρατύνθω περὶ Θεοῦ· πίστις, ἀλήθεια, ἔρως, ἐλπίς.



to the Oriental Gnosticism, which he received from Plotinus, and which united a Theosophy based on Platonism with the spiritualized polytheistic system, rendered him a violent enemy of Christianity, which could not be forced to accommodate itself to his eclectic theory.

Porphyry, in the letter to his wife, calls it the noblest fruit of piety to worship God after the manner of one's country.\* Christianity, then, would be hateful to him, if on no other grounds, yet simply because it was a religion that conflicted with the national worship. As it was his wish to maintain a form of worship which could not be made to harmonize with the fundamental ideas of his philosophical religion except by artificial interpretations, unintelligible to the multitude, he was necessarily betrayed into many inconsistencies. He was, as we have seen, a zealous advocate of image-worship; and in encouraging this he countenanced at the same time the old superstitions, since the people associated their ancient notions with these images. And yet he writes to his wife, "*He is not so much an Atheist who honours not the images of the gods, as he who thinks of God in the same way as the multitude.*"

He wrote a work against Christianity, in which he pretended to detect contradictions in the sacred scriptures,—contradictions between the Apostles,—especially between the Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul.† In this work he doubtless adroitly availed himself of the weak points presented, not by the matter itself which he was attacking, but by the manner in which men had set it forth and defended it. For example, when he found certain harmonists attempting to set forth the New Testament as a rigid unity, he might perhaps be tempted to point out discrepancies in it,—of which, we may well suppose, he would be sure to make a false use; or, as Celsus had done before him,‡ seizing upon the artificial allegorical interpretations of the Old Testament, which men had resorted to for the purpose of showing that every part of it was in the same manner divine, and that every doctrine of

\* Ep. ad Marcellam, ed. Mai. c. 18, where perhaps the reading should be, *τιμᾶν τὸ θεῖον κατὰ τὰ πάτρια*.

† Where he has recourse to the fallacious argument grounded on the well-known incident at Antioch, Gal. 2.

‡ See c. Cels. l. I. c. 17; l. IV. c. 48.

Christianity might be found in it, probably drew from them a proof that to the natural and simple understanding the Old Testament admitted of no worthy sense. With good reason could he say of such explanations, that men had contrived, by pompous show, to dazzle and bewilder the judgment.\* Yet what he was able with so much justice to urge against this artificial interpretation of the Old Testament recoiled with no less weight upon himself and the school to which he belonged, since, in interpreting the Greek religion and its fables, they took equally unwarrantable liberties.

Of another work of Porphyry's we possess fuller and more accurate information. In this also he has spoken against Christianity, and probably it was intended, indirectly at least, to present a check to its progress. It is a system of Theology such as could be drawn up from the ancient pretended responses of the Oracles.† Now, among the responses of the Oracles, some are to be found which relate to Christ and Christianity. An evidence this of the power with which Christianity influenced the whole spiritual atmosphere, so that in their most immediate relations it enforced itself upon their notice. Hence many were at a loss how they ought to act with regard to it, and sought for advice from the Oracles or from the priests who spoke in their name. The responses to these applications differed in tone and import according to the different modes of thinking of the priests who gave them. In the first centuries it frequently occurred that the women became zealous Christians, while their husbands remained devoted to paganism. In a case of this sort a man inquired of Apollo what god he had best propitiate in order to bring back his wife from Christianity.‡

\* The words of Porphyry, which very aptly characterize this sort of self-delusion in the interpretation of the records of religion, are as follows: *Διὰ τοῦ τύφου τὸ κριτικὸν τῆς ψυχῆς καταγοητεύσαντες*. Euseb. hist. eccles. l. VI. c. 19.

† *Περὶ τῆς ἐκ λόγιων φιλοσοφίας*, of which, in many respects, very interesting work considerable fragments have been preserved in the twelve sermonib. curat. affect. of Theodoretus, in Augustine's work *de Civitate Dei*, after a Latin version, in which Augustine had read it; and especially in that great literary storehouse the *Præparat. Evang. and Demonstrat. Evangel. of Eusebius*. Maii has published a new fragment in connection with the letter to Marcella.

‡ Maii infers from this place, altogether without reason, that Porphyry's Marcella was a Christian. Porphyry undoubtedly cites here the *question of another*, as he does frequently in this work. The letter to



The pretended Apollo, who was doubtless well aware how strong was the force of conviction among the Christians, answered, "That he might sooner write on the flowing stream, or fly on the empty air, than change the mind of his wife after she had once become impure and godless. Leave her, then, to lament *her deceased God*."\* Apollo appears next justifying the judges who had condemned Jesus to death as a revolter against Judaism: "for the Jews acknowledged God, at least more than the Christians" (the common judgment of the pagans, as we have already observed).

Many of the pagans were led to suppose, from what they had heard concerning Christ, that he might be worshipped as a god along with the other gods, and they consulted the Oracle on this point. It is remarkable that the priests who, in this case, composed the response, were cautious against saying anything disrespectful of Christ himself. The answer was, "He who is wise knows that the soul rises immortal from the body; but the soul of that man is preëminent in piety."† When they inquired further why Christ had suffered death, they received for answer, "To be subject to light sufferings is always the lot of the body, but the soul of the pious rises to the fields of heaven."‡ Here Porphyry himself takes occa-

Marcella contains no evidence whatever that she was a Christian, but rather goes to prove the contrary.

\* Augustin. de civitate Dei, l. XIX. c. 23. The strength of religious conviction among Jews and Christians became proverbial, as we see from the words of Galen, the celebrated physician, where he is speaking of the great difficulty of bringing about any change in the opinions of those who are devoted to particular schools of medicine or philosophy, and makes use of the following comparison: *Θάπτον ἄν τις τοὺς ἀπὸ Μωϋσοῦ καὶ Χριστοῦ μεταδιδάξῃεν, ἢ κ, τ. λ.* De different. pulsuum, l. III. c. 3, ed. Charter, T. VIII. f. 68.

† "Ὅτι μὲν ἀθανάτη ψυχὴ μετὰ σῶμα προβαίνει,  
γινώσκει σοφίη τετιμημένης, ἀλλὰ γε ψυχὴ  
ἀνέρος εὐσεβίῃ προφεισσομένη ἐστὶν ἐκείνου.

Euseb. Demonstrat. evang. l. III. p. 134.

‡ Σῶμα μὲν ἀδρανέσιν βασιάνοις αἰεὶ προβέβληται·  
ψυχὴ δ' εὐσεβέων εἰς οὐράνιον πῆδον ἵζει.

It may be that Porphyry was occasionally deceived by spurious oracles that had been interpolated either by Alexandrian Jews or other and older pagan Platonicians. It is quite possible also that oracles of this description had been interpolated by some other more rightly thinking pagan, under the name of the god or the goddess; though it may be very well conceived, and indeed is more natural to suppose, that these

sion to explain that Christ, therefore, must not be calumniated; only they ought to be pitied who worship him as God. "That pious soul, which has ascended to heaven, has by a kind of destiny become an occasion of error to those souls who were doomed to have no share in the gifts of the gods and in the knowledge of the eternal Zeus."

The list of authors who wrote against Christianity is closed by *Hierocles*, president of Bithynia, and afterwards præfect of Alexandria. The time which this writer selected for making his attack was the last that any man of noble and generous feelings would have chosen,—that of the Dioclesian persecution. And it was particularly unbecoming in Hierocles to set himself up as a teacher of the Christians, both because he was one of the chief instigators of the persecution, and a principal instrument in carrying it into effect. Yet he assumed the air of one who was actuated by an impartial love of the truth, and who wrote with the kindest feelings towards the Christians, for he entitled his performance 'Truth-loving words to the Christians.'\* In this work he brings forward again much that had been said already by Celsus and Porphyry. He indulges in the most abominable falsehoods about the history of Christ. In particular, for the purpose of at once glorifying the old religion and attacking the Christian faith, he made use of a comparison of which probably he was not the original inventor. To give a new impulse to the declining religion of paganism in its resistance to the overwhelming power of Christianity, it was necessary to direct men's attention to those heroes of the old religion who, it was imagined, could be set up in comparison to him on whom alone the faith of the Christians reposed. Accordingly the lives of the ancient sages,—of Pythagoras, for example, as portrayed by the Neo-Platonic philosopher Jamblichus,—were coloured over with a

oracles were actually given on the occasions specified. But assuredly the suspicion is altogether unfounded that they were invented by some Christian, for Christians would certainly have never been able to make up their minds to say so little of Christ. The example being once given of such pagan oracles in relation to Christ, Christians might then no doubt be led to invent others. In the oracular response cited by Lactantius (institut. l. VI. c. 13) the words concerning Christ, *Θνητὸς ἔην κατὰ σάρκα, σοφὸς τερατώδεις ἔργοις*, and several others, betray their Christian author.

\* *Λόγοι φιλαλήθεις πρὸς τοὺς Χριστιανούς.*



tinge of the marvellous, if not expressly with such an object, yet, at least, under the influence of such a tendency, which at this time regulated the religious consciousness of the pagans. But men did not wish to go back to hoary antiquity to draw from it the heroes of their faith,—they wanted to find them nearer home. The appearance of men who, like Apollonius of Tyana, had occasioned unusual excitement in the public mind, was employed against Christianity in two different ways. Those who were in the habit of referring all extraordinary phenomena of the religious spirit alike to fanaticism or fraud,—men like Lucian, who placed Apollonius of Tyana on the same level with Alexander of Abonoteichus,—sought by the means of this comparison to account also for the phenomena and effects of Christianity. Others, again, would oppose Apollonius, as a prophet and worker of miracles among the Greeks, to the founder of the new religion. This was the course adopted by Hierocles. He wished to lessen the constraining evidence of the miracles of Christ by the miracles of this Apollonius. He claimed implicit credit for every fable which ages after the alleged events the rhetorical Philostratus had drawn either from unauthenticated sources, or out of his own imagination; as, for example, that Apollonius understood the language of brutes; while the apostles, uneducated, lying men,—jugglers, as Hierocles abusively called them without proving it,—are said by him to have stated nothing but falsehoods. “You hold Christ to be God,” he said, “because he is reported to have restored a few blind men to sight, and to have done some other works of the like kind; and yet Apollonius, who was the author of so many miracles, is not held by the Greeks to be a god, but only a man particularly beloved of the gods.” Such was the peculiar method of argument adopted by Hierocles.\*

The Life of Apollonius quoted by Hierocles was composed by the rhetorician Philostratus the elder, a favourite of Julia Domna the wife of Septimius Severus. In it some have supposed they could discover a covert attack upon Christianity. But there is not a single passage of the work that furnishes any evidence of such a design, even though it abounds in

\* See respecting him Lactant. l. V. c. 2; de mortib. persecutor. c. 16 Euseb. adv. Hierocl.

opportunities for introducing hostile remarks upon Christianity, as, for instance, where it speaks of the Jews. On the other hand, the writer mentions the fall of Jerusalem as a divine retribution, of which the Roman arms were only the instrument,\* in such a way as seems to favour the interests of Christianity, and as indeed might lead to the supposition that he was unconsciously influenced by the mode of contemplating that event which prevailed among the Christians. Yet our remarks on Hierocles are not wholly inapplicable to the case of Philostratus. Whether it sprang from a conscious design, or from an involuntary interest, the effort is apparent in the work to give dignity to his hero as a counterpart of Christ; but in so doing we need not suppose that he was influenced by any *polemical aim against* the Christian faith, but simply by a wish to set forth the splendour of the Greek religion as able to vie with Christianity.† It may be that the miracles of Christ, of which he was informed, furnished the occasion for many scattered embellishments of his own invention, although no trace of this can be found so *distinct* and *palpable* as to put this matter beyond question.

These attacks on the Christian church were, from the time of the emperor Hadrian and downwards, met by men who zealously came forward in defence of Christianity and the Christians. We reserve to another portion of our history a full and detailed account of these apologists and of their writings. Here we shall simply remark that these apologies were of two different forms, and had two distinct objects in view. One class were expositions of Christian doctrine, designed for the use of enlightened pagans generally; the other class had a more official character, intended to advocate the cause of the Christians before emperors or before the pro-consuls and presidents of the provinces. As they could not obtain a personal hearing, they were obliged to make themselves heard through their writings. The supposition that

\* L. VI. c. 29, he makes Titus say, in reference to the destruction of Jerusalem: Μὴ αὐτὸς ταῦτα εἰργάσθαι, θεῶν δὲ ἔργον φηνᾶντι ἐπιδιδάκναι τὰς αὐτοῦ χεῖρας.

† As Dr. Baur also supposes, in his Essay on Apollonios of Tyana (in the Tübinger Zeitschrift für Theologie. Jahrg. 1832, 4tes Heft, also separately printed), although I cannot allow that all the references to the history of Christ which Baur finds in this book are sufficiently proved.



the forms of address to the emperors, to the senate, and the governors, were merely an ornamental dress given to these works, after the fashion of the declamations practised in the rhetorical schools of the pagans, is certainly inconsistent with the situation and temper of the Christians of this time. It is far more natural to suppose that the authors of such writings were seeking to correct the judgment of the civil authorities respecting Christianity and its adherents. We cannot wonder, however, that these apologies seldom or never produced their desired effect on the authorities, for the latter would hardly give themselves the time, and still less were they in a suitable mood, to examine with calmness the arguments of these apologists. Even masterpieces of apologetic art—which these productions, written from the fullness of conviction, were certainly not—could, in such a case, have produced no effect; for there was no possible way in which they could recommend Christianity to Roman statesmen, who regarded religion exclusively from a political point of view. This being the paramount principle of the Roman statesman, they availed nothing, though they bore witness with the force of inspiration to truths which had first gained a more general recognition among men through the revolution in opinion brought about by Christianity; though they appealed to the universal rights of man inherent in him from the creation; though they assumed as a point which every man must concede, that religion is a matter of freedom of conviction and feeling, that belief cannot be forced, that God cannot be served with the worship of constraint. “It is a part of human right and natural prerogative that every individual,” says Tertullian, “should worship the God in whom he believes; it is no business of religion to force religion; it must be embraced voluntarily, not imposed by constraint, as sacrifices are required only from the willing heart. Although, then, you should compel us to sacrifice, you will still gain nothing for your gods.”\* But by the principle of the Roman law, which here came immediately into consideration, there was no question respecting the *inward religion*, but only respecting the *out-*

\* *Humani juris et naturalis potestatis est unicuique, quod putaverit, colere, nec alii obest aut prodest alterius religio. Sed nec religionis est, cogere religionem, quæ sponte suscipi debeat, non vi, cum et hostiæ ab animo libenti expostulentur. Ad Scapulam, c. 2.*

*ward fulfilment of the laws*, the observance of the "Roman ceremonies." It made no distinction between men and citizens. The apologists might appeal to the blameless lives of the Christians; they might challenge the magistrates to subject them to the severest judicial examinations, and, if any were found guilty, to punish them; but this could avail nothing. The more intelligent had long since ceased to believe the strange and fabulous reports of the populace. Like Pliny, they could not accuse the Christians, as a body, of any moral delinquency. But yet the Christian life appeared to them incompatible with the "Roman manners," and Christianity a feverish fanaticism dangerous to the good order of the Roman state.

It was a sound and healthy feeling that induced the apologists of Christianity to assume the existence of a prophetic element, not in Judaism alone, but also in paganism, and to appeal to this in the same way as the Apostle Paul at Athens, in proclaiming the God of revelation, appealed to that presentiment of the unknown God which lives in the immediate consciousness of mankind, and to the way in which this feeling had gained expression in the words of inspired poets. Christianity, in truth, is the end to which all development of the religious consciousness necessarily tended, and to it, therefore, the latter could not fail to furnish prophetic testimony. Thus there dwelt a prophetic element, not barely in revealed religion, as it was gradually unfolded beneath the fostering care of the divine vintager (John xv.)—as from Judaism it swelled to its fullest expansion in Christianity—but also in that religion which had sprung up wild\* on the soil of paganism, but which, even with the unconsciousness of nature, tended towards the same end. But though, in their search for such points of agreement, the apologists had a well-founded right to search those stages of culture out of which they themselves had passed into Christianity, and for this purpose made copious collections from the ancient philosophers and poets, still they had not yet

\* I here make use of an expression coined for this purpose by Schelling, a man endowed above all others with the gift of finding its right word for the expression of the idea,—to mark the notion of natural religion in its relation to the religion of revelation. In like manner, Clement of Alexandria styles the Hellenic philosophy, in its relation to Christianity, the *ἀγρίλαιος*. Strom. VI. f. 672.



passed far enough out of the very process of development to be able rightly to understand the earlier culture, either in its opposition to Christianity or in its relationship and introduction to it. It was only what might easily happen if they were led insensibly to transfer their Christian mode of apprehension to their earlier positions, and allowed themselves to be deceived by mere appearances of resemblance. Add to this, that Alexandrian Jews and pagan Platonists had already palmed off many forgeries under the famous names of antiquity, which might be taken as testimonies in behalf of the religious truths advanced by Christianity in opposition to pagan polytheism. And at a time when critical skill, as well as interest in critical inquiries, was unknown, it would be easy for men who, under the influence of a purely religious interest, were seeking for testimonies from among the ancients, to be imposed upon by spurious and interpolated matter, as was not seldom the case with the Christian apologists.

For instance, interpolated writings of this kind, passing under the name of that mythic personage of antiquity, the Grecian Hermes (Trismegistus) or the Egyptian Thoth—also under the names of the Persian Hystaspes (Gushtasp), and of the Sibyls, so celebrated in the Greek and Roman legends—were alike used in good faith by the apologists. Whatever truth might be lying at the bottom of those ancient legends of the Sibylline prophecies,\* of which the profound Heraclitus, five hundred years before Christ, had said, "Their unadorned, earnest words, spoken with inspired mouth, reach through a thousand years,"† most unquestionably the consciousness of such a prophetic element in paganism—all that in these pre-

\* The prophetic element, as a natural power in a religion of nature, is characteristically distinguished from the supernatural prophetic element of revealed religion. Thus we find the character of the former expressed in ancient verses, cited under the name of the Sibyl, in Plutarch de Pythiæ oraculis, c. 9: 'Ὡς οὐδὲ ἀποθανοῦσα λήξει μαντικῆς, ἀλλ' αὕτη μὲν ἐν τῇ σελήνῃ περιέεισι τὸ καλούμενον φαινόμενον γενομένη πρόσωπον, τῇ δὲ αἴρι τὸ πνεῦμα συγκαρδὲν ἐν φήμαις αἰὶ φορήσεται καὶ κληδόσιν, ἐκ δὲ τοῦ σώματος μεταβαλόντος ἐν τῇ γῇ πᾶς καὶ ὕλης ἀναφυομένης, βροχῆσεται ταύτην ἱερὰ θρέμματα χροᾶς τε παντοδαπὰς ἴσχοντα καὶ μορφὰς καὶ ποιότητας ἐπὶ τῶν σπλάγχχνων, ἅφ' ὧν αἱ προδηλώσεις ἀνθρώποις τοῦ μέλλοντος.

† Σύβυλλα μαινομένῳ στόματι ἀγέλαστα καὶ ἀκαλλώπιστα καὶ ἀμύριστα φθεγγομένη χιλίων ἐτῶν ἔξικνῆται τῇ φωνῇ διὰ τὸν θεόν. Plutarch. de Pythiæ oraculis, c. 6.

dictions spoke of the fates of cities and nations, and more particularly of a final and a golden age of the world,\* gave occasion to divers interpretations based upon Jewish and Christian principles; and as it had been the practice from very early times, with both pagans and Jews, to interpolate the Sibylline predictions † with spurious verses, accommodated to their respective religious views, so, from the very first century after Christ, Christian fiction added its *quota* to the rest. When Celsus reproached the Christians with interpolating many scandalous things into the Sibylline writings, ‡ Origen in his reply could appeal to the fact that the more ancient Sibylline writings were full of interpolations. With this use of the so called Sibylline prophecies, all Christians, however, were not satisfied. Celsus mentions the Sibyllists § among the various Christian sects, and Origen accounts for it by supposing that Celsus might some time or other have heard this name applied in reproach to those who quoted the Sibyl as a prophetess by other Christians who did not approve of this practice. This, however, is not to be understood as implying that such opponents of the Sibylline prophecies had, on critical grounds, ascertained the spuriousness of these writings, || and therefore refused to countenance such a fraud for pious purposes. It is far more probable to suppose that they revolted, *à priori*, at the very hypothesis of anything like prophetic power having existed *among the heathen*.

While, by others, the testimonies, genuine and interpolated, derived from heathen literature, were employed against the pagans, Tertullian chose a different course. Disposed to see in all culture, and science, and art, the falsification of original truth, he preferred to appeal to the involuntary utterances of the immediate, original voice of God in nature. As evidence for Christian truth against polytheism, he appealed to the spontaneous expressions of an irrepressible and immediate religious consciousness in common life—the testimony of the

\* *Ultima Cumæi carminis ætas*; vid. Virgil, IV. Eclog.

† Varro, in his great archæological work, treated, already in his time, of the different constituent parts of the Sibylline books, and of the interpolated verses. See Dionysius of Halicarn. Archæol. I. IV. c. 62.

‡ L. VII. c. 56: "Ὅτι παρενέγραψαν εἰς τὰ ἐκείνης πολλά καὶ βλάσφημα.

§ c. Cels. I. V. c. 61.

|| *Testimonium animæ naturaliter Christianæ*. Apologet. c. 17.



soul, which he held to be Christian by nature\*—the testimony of the simple, uncultivated, ignorant soul, previous to all education.† In his apology addressed to the pagans he makes appeal to this witness of the soul, “which, though confined in the prison of the body, though led astray by wrong training, though enfeebled by the desires and passions, yet, when it comes to itself, as out of a fit of intoxication, as out of a sleep, out of a disease, and when conscious of its healthful condition, calls God simply by this name alone, because it is the proper name of the true God. Great God—good God—and what God gives,—these are common expressions with all. It also adjures this God as its judge in such expression as these: God is my witness—to God I commit my cause—God will requite me. Finally, in using these expressions, it looks, not to the Capitol, but upward to heaven; for it knows the seat of the living God—from Him and from thence it descended.”‡

\* *De testimonio animæ, c. 1: Te simplicem et rudem et impolitam et idioticam compello, qualem habent, qui te solam habent, illam ipsam de compito, de trivio, de textrino totam.*

† *Apologet. c. 17.*

‡ *Quæ, licet carcere corporis pressa, licet institutionibus pravis circumscripta, licet libidinibus ac concupiscentiis evigorata, licet falsis Diis exancillata, cum tamen resipiscit, ut ex crapula, ut ex somno, ut ex aliqua valetudine, et sanitatem suam patitur, Deum nominat, hoc solo nomine, quia proprio Dei veri. Deus magnus, Deus bonus, et quod Deus dederit, omnium vox est. Judicem quoque contestatur illum, Deus videt, et Deo commendo, et Deus mihi reddet. Denique, pronuntians hæc, non ad Capitolium, sed ad cælum respicit. Novit enim sedem Dei vivi, ab illo et inde descendit.*

## SECTION SECOND.

## HISTORY OF THE CHURCH CONSTITUTION, OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE, AND OF SCHISMS IN THE CHURCH.

## I. HISTORY OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH.

1. *Of the Constitution of Church Communities generally.*

IN the history of the formation of the constitution of the Christian church, two different epochs require to be carefully distinguished:—*the first epoch of its formation, as, in the Apostolic age, it sprang out of the peculiar essence of Christianity*—that essential character of Christianity whereby it is wholly distinguished, as well from the Old Testament position as from all the previous forms of religious community; *and secondly, the concluding epoch, in which this original form of fellowship among Christians became gradually changed under various foreign influences.* We speak first, then, of *the foundation laid for the constitution of Christian communities in the Apostolic age.*

A. *The first foundation for the constitution of Christian communities in the Apostolic age.*

What Moses expressed as a wish\*—that the Spirit of God might rest upon all, and all might be prophets—seems to me a prediction of that which was to be realised through Christ. By him was to be instituted a fellowship of divine life, which, proceeding from the equal and equally immediate relation of all to the one God, as the divine source of life to all, should remove those boundaries within which, at the Old Testament position, the development of the higher life was still confined; and hence the fellowship thus derived would essentially distinguish itself from the constitution of all previously existing religious societies. There could, in such a society, be no

\* Numbers 11, 29.



longer a priestly or prophetic office, constituted to serve as a medium for the propagation and development of the kingdom of God, on which office the religious consciousness of the community was to be dependent. Such a guild of priests as existed in the previous systems of religion, empowered to guide other men, who remained, as it were, in a state of religious pupilage; having the *exclusive* care of providing for their religious wants, and serving as mediators by whom all other men must first be placed in connection with God and divine things—such a priestly caste could find no place within Christianity. In removing that which separated men *from God*, in communicating to all the same fellowship *with God*, Christ also removed the barrier which had hitherto divided men *from one another*. Christ, the Prophet and High Priest for entire humanity, was the end of the prophetic office and of the priesthood. There was now the same High Priest and Mediator for all, through whom all men, being once reconciled and united with God, are themselves made a priestly and spiritual race; one heavenly King, Guide, and Teacher, through whom all are taught of God; one faith, one hope, one Spirit which should quicken all; one oracle in the hearts of all, the voice of the Spirit proceeding from the Father;—all were to be citizens of one heavenly kingdom, with whose heavenly powers, even while strangers in the world, they should be already furnished. When the Apostles applied the Old Testament idea of the priesthood to Christianity, this seems to me to have been done invariably for the simple purpose of showing that no such visible, particular priesthood could find place in the new community; that since free access to God and to heaven had by the one High Priest, even Christ, been opened once for all to believers, they had, by virtue of their union to him, become themselves a spiritual people, consecrated to God; their calling being none other than to dedicate their entire life to God as a thank-offering for the grace of redemption, to publish abroad the power and grace of Him who had called them out of the kingdom of darkness into his marvellous light, to make their life one continual priesthood, one spiritual worship springing from the temper of faith working by love—one continuous testimony for their Saviour. (Compare 1 Pet. ii. 9; Rom. xii. 1; and the spirit and whole train of thought running through the Epistle to the Hebrews.)

So, too, the advancement of God's kingdom in general and in particular, the diffusion of Christianity among the heathens and the good of each particular community, was now to be the duty not of one select class of Christians alone, but the immediate concern of each individual. Every one, from the position assigned him by the invisible Head of the church, ought to coöperate in promoting this object by the special gifts which God had bestowed on him—gifts grounded in *his peculiar nature*, but that nature renewed and ennobled by the Holy Spirit. There was no distinction here of spiritual and secular; but all, as Christians, should, in their inner life, in temper and disposition, be dead to the ungodlike, to the world, and in so far separate from the world—men animated by the Spirit of God and not by the spirit of the world. The individual predominant capabilities of Christians, sanctified, made godly by this Spirit, and appropriated as organs for its activity, should be transformed to *charismata*, gifts of grace. Thus, therefore, in his 1 Cor. xiii., did the Apostle begin his exposition—"Once, when ye were heathens, ye suffered yourselves to be led blindly by your priests to dumb idols; ye were dead and dumb as they. Now, while ye serve the living God, through Christ, ye have no longer any such leaders to draw you along blindly by leading-strings. Ye have now for your guide the Spirit of God, who illuminates you. Ye follow no more dumbly. He speaks by you; there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit." \*

The essence of the Christian community rested on this: that no one individual should be the chosen preëminent organ of the Holy Spirit for the guidance of the whole; but, for the

\* [Such is the paraphrase which Neander can allow himself in order to prove his hypothesis. If it had been the Apostle's argument to prove the *equality* of all the members, his illustration from the "less honourable" and "*uncomely parts*," and the "part that lacked," would be out of place. Besides, does he not deny the equality of all in vv. 29, 30, when he asks if *all* are Apostles, &c.? Again, if there were to be no guides or rulers, why bid the Hebrews (xiii. 17) to "obey those that have the rule over them (their guides or rulers, *ἡγουμένους*)"? see also v. 7, 1 Thess. v. 12, (*προϊσταμένους*.) That the Apostles did not leave the whole church to propagate and keep up the life of Christianity, but did appoint a select class for that purpose, is plain from 1 Tim. iii. 2, &c.; iv. 14; 2 Tim. ii.; Tit. i. 5. If 1 Pet. ii. 9, &c., is a proof that Christianity was to have no separate priesthood, then Exod. xix. 5, 6, must prove that the Jews had none, which is absurd. *Eng. Editor.*]



advancement of the Christian life and of the common end, all were to coöperate—each at his particular position, and with the gifts bestowed on him, one supplying what might be wanted by another. In this view of it, the idea of the *charisma* which I think is set forth in the New Testament becomes important. The *charisma* designates the individuality and diversity in the operations of the Spirit that quickens all, as contradistinguished from that which in all is the same; it is the *peculiar* kind and manner or form of the operation of that common principle, so far as it is modified by the peculiar natural characteristics of each individual. Just as the unity of that higher Spirit necessarily manifests itself in the multiplicity of the *charismata*, so these various peculiarities, quickened by the same Spirit, are to serve as organs which, by their mutual coöperation, are to bring about one common end—the edification of the church. We understand edification here in its general and original sense, as given to it in St. Paul's writings, as referring to the advancement and development, from its common ground, of the whole life of the church. The edification of the church, in this sense, was the common work of all. Even edification by the word was not assigned exclusively to one individual; every man who felt the inward call to it might give utterance to the word in the assembled church. With a view to the same end there was likewise a difference of gifts, grounded in the diversity of the peculiar natures which were severally quickened by the Holy Spirit; according, for example, as the productive faculty (prophecy), or the receptive (interpretation, the *διερμηνεία*), or the critical (proving of spirits) prevailed; or according as the capacity for feeling and intuition, or that of sober reflective thought, predominated; according as the Divine, in its overwhelming force, had the predominance, and the Human, in its independent development, gave place to it; or as both the Divine and the Human harmonized and coöperated, according as inspiration came with a momentaneous and sudden seizure, or what was contained in the Christian consciousness became unfolded through a process of thought quickened by the Holy Spirit (where again there were manifold gradations, from an ecstatic elevation of mind down to the uniform, discreet, and cautious unfolding of the understanding, speaking with tongues, prophecy, the ordinary gift of teaching);—in

fine, according as the prevailing tendency was to the theoretical or to the practical (the *Gnosis* or the *Sophia*).

Since Christianity was not to destroy any of those natural distinctions which were grounded in the laws of the original creation, but to sanctify and ennoble them (for our Saviour's words, that he came not to destroy but to fulfil, apply also to the natural world): so, although the partition-wall between man and woman, in respect to the higher life, was broken down by Christ, and in him man and woman become one, Christianity would still have the woman remain true to the particular sphere and destination assigned to her by nature. Women were forbidden to take any public part in the transactions of the church; assigned to their appropriate sphere of activity within the bosom of the family, they were to hold corresponding place in the administration of its private affairs. The Apostle Paul (1 Cor. xiv. 34) interdicts the female part of the church alone from publicly speaking in the assemblies; which again seems to me to make it evident that, among the Christians, no other exception existed to the universality of this right. The latter exception, however, continued to be made in succeeding times. Even the enthusiastic Montanists recognised its validity, only they maintained that the extraordinary operations of the divine Spirit were not bound by any such rule. In proof of this they referred to the case of the prophetesses mentioned in 1 Cor. xi. 5; though they did so incorrectly, since in this passage the Apostle simply speaks of a practice that prevailed in the Corinthian church without approving it, but with a design of correcting it in a later part of the epistle. This is evident from a comparison of 1 Cor. xi. 5, with xiv. 34.\*

As, however, from the very first, the *inner* fellowship of divine life, which Christianity introduced, strove to exhibit itself in an outward fellowship, it must necessarily adopt some determinate form, which should be agreeable to its own

\* The Hilary who wrote commentaries on the Epistles of St. Paul is remarkable for the freedom from prejudice with which he contemplates Christian antiquity. In speaking of these matters, also, he correctly distinguishes the earlier from the later practice of the church. *Primum omnes docebant et omnes baptizabant, ut cresceret plebs et multiplicaretur, omnibus inter initia concessum est, et evangelizare et baptizare et scripturas explanare.* Hilar. in epist. Ephes. c. IV. v. 12. [But see the context as to who are meant by "omnes"—plainly the "clerici." Eng. Ed.]



essence, and in which it could shape and manifest itself as a spiritual body. For without such a form no association, whatever its purpose, can long continue to subsist. To this end a certain organization was necessary—a certain relative subordination of the different members, according to the different positions assigned them in reference to the whole;—a certain guidance and direction of the common concerns, and consequently a distinction of organs destined to effect the several ends. And this does not in anywise contradict what we formerly asserted respecting the essential character of Christianity and of the fellowship which is founded therein, or respecting the mutual relations of Christians. On the contrary, the natural relation of members to one another points of itself to some such organic form as indispensable in the constitution of the community. For as there were individual characters predominantly productive, and others of a more receptive bent; as there were those preëminently calculated to guide and rule; and as the Christian life shaped itself to the form of these natural peculiarities, which it ennobled—the natural talent being elevated to a charisma—the result was that some members of the community would come to be possessed of the gift which is designated in the epistles of St. Paul as the *χάρισμα κυβερνήσεως* (governments). This mutual relation of gifts grounded on the natural talents of individuals pointed to a corresponding relation of the several members of the community to one another. The *χάρισμα κυβερνήσεως* required, in the organization of the church, a corresponding office, the fitness for which had been conferred by that gift. This was a whole, composed of homogeneous members, all these being but the organs of the community, as the latter was the body quickened by the Spirit of Christ. As organs of the whole and of the one Spirit which gave it life, these several members were to coöperate, each in its appropriate place, for the common end; and in this organization of parts some acted preëminently as the ruling members. But in a natural way the essence of the Christian life and of Christian communion could hardly lead to *this guidance being placed in the hands of a single individual. The monarchical form of government was in no ways suited to the Christian community of spirit.*

The preëminence of a single individual at the head of the whole was too likely to operate as a check on the free develop-

ment of the life of the church, and the free action of the different organs, in whom it was necessary to keep alive a consciousness of mutual independence. The individual on whom everything would in such a constitution be made to depend, might acquire too great an importance for the rest, and consequently become the centre round which all would gather, in such a manner as to obscure the sense of their common relation to *that One* who ought to be the centre for all. The Apostles stood to the collective body of Christians in a relation which corresponded to their peculiar position in the development of the church, and for that very reason it could not be transferred to another office; for they alone were to be the bearers of Christ's word and spirit for all ages—the chosen witnesses of his person and ministry, as well as of his resurrection to a new and more glorious state of being—the necessary intermediate links by which the whole church was to be connected with Christ. This was a relation of dependence and subordination, grounded in the nature of the historical development, which could not be repeated. And the Apostles themselves, to whom this position in the guidance of the church belonged—how far were they from exercising a constraining authority in its affairs, or to lord it over the faith, which, the foundations having once been laid, was thenceforward to develop itself with freedom, and give shape to everything by its own inherent power alone! What respect did not they show for the free development of the collective body! They endeavoured to obtain the free coöperation of the several communities in all the affairs which concerned these bodies—a point on which we shall speak more particularly hereafter. St. Peter and St. John, in their epistles, place themselves in the same class with the leaders of the churches, instead of claiming a place *above* them as general rulers of the church.\* How difficult would it be to find an individual uniting in himself all the qualifications for guiding the affairs of the body, and possessing the confidence of all! How much easier to find in every community several fathers of families, whose respective qualifications might supply the deficiencies of each other! individually, one might enjoy the greatest confidence with one, and a second with some other class of the community; both together, therefore, being qualified for such

[\* Does not St. Peter style himself an apostle as well as elder?]



a function. *Monarchy in spiritual things* does not harmonise with the spirit of Christianity, for this points everywhere to the feeling of a mutual need, to the necessity and to the blessing as well of common deliberation as of common prayer. Where two or three are gathered together in the name of the Lord, he promises to be in the midst of them.

Besides, Christianity freely appropriated to its own use such existing forms as were adapted to its spirit and essential character. Now in the Jewish synagogue, and in all the sects that sprang out of Judaism, there existed a form of government which was not monarchical, but aristocratical, consisting of a council of elders, *זְנַיִם*, *πρεσβύτεροι*, who had the guidance of all affairs belonging to the common interest. To this form, Christianity, which unfolded itself out of Judaism, would most naturally attach itself. The same polity, moreover, would appear most natural whenever churches were founded among the pagans in any part of the Roman empire, for here men had long been accustomed to see the affairs of state administered by a senate or assembly of decuriones. It is, to my mind, an evidence of such an affinity between the ecclesiastical and the civil form of administration, that at a somewhat later period the clergy were denominated *ordo*, the guiding senate of the community, since *ordo* stands preëminently for the *ordo senatorum*.\*

The guidance of the communities was therefore most probably intrusted everywhere to a council of elders. It was not necessary that these should be the oldest in years, though some respect doubtless was had to age. Age was here generally a designation of worth, as in the Latin "*senatus*," and in the Greek "*γερονσία*." Besides the usual name, *πρεσβύτεροι*, given to the heads of the church, there were also many others, denoting their appropriate sphere of action, as *ποιμένες*, shepherds; *פְּרָשִׁי* *הָגוּרִים*, *προεστῶτες τῶν ἀδελφῶν*. The founding of churches among the pagans led to another name, more conformable to the Grecian mode of designating such relations than the terms above cited, which clearly bespeak their Jewish origin. This name was *ἐπίσκοποι*, borrowed from the civil

\* [But if the Jewish analogy influenced the form of the Christian community as a religious body, the religious institution of the priesthood was more likely to recommend itself than the civil one of the elders.] *But did it?*

form of government among the Greeks,\* and applied to the presiding officers of the Christian churches, as overseers of the whole, and leaders of the community.

That the name *ἐπίσκοποι*, or bishops, was altogether *synonymous* with that of presbyters, is clearly evident from those passages of scripture where both passages are used interchangeably (Acts xx., comp. v. 17 with v. 28; Ep. to Titus, c. i. v. 5 with v. 7), and from those where the office of deacon is named immediately after that of bishop, so that between these two offices no third one could possibly intervene. Ep. to Philipp. i. 1; 1 Tim. iii. 1 and 8. This interchange of the two appellations shows that originally they were perfectly identical. Even were the name bishop originally nothing more than the distinctive title of a president of this church-senate, of a *Primus inter pares*, yet even in this case such an interchange would be altogether inadmissible. So, too, in the letter which Clement, the disciple of Paul, writes in the name of the Roman church, the deacons are immediately named after the bishops as the rulers of the churches.†

\* See on this point my Hist. of the Planting, &c., Vol. I. p. 198.

† See Cap. 42. [The identity of the terms *πρεσβύτεροι* and *ἐπίσκοποι* is not disputed; neither is there any question whether a third order intervened *between* the bishops or elders and the deacons; but whether scripture does not under another name recognise a third order *above* both. We read of Timothy and Titus being appointed to "charge others what doctrines they should teach," (1 Tim. i. 3,) "to set in order the things that were wanting, and to ordain elders in every city," (Tit. i. 5,) and to ordain deacons, 1 Tim. iii. 8, "by laying on of hands," ib. v. 22. Thus then, scripture distinctly sets before us three orders: 1. Apostles appointed by Apostles (as Timothy and Titus were by St. Paul); 2. Bishops or elders; 3. Deacons (the last two being appointed by the first). But Timothy and Titus were commissioned by St. Paul not only to ordain the second and third orders, they were also empowered to select successors to themselves in the first (2 Tim. ii. 2). But these "faithful men" were no longer called Apostles, this term being for distinction's sake confined to such as had been chosen Apostles by the Lord himself, and so promoted in its use; those who were elected by men (by the Apostles and their successors) to the apostolical office were henceforward termed bishops, the word *ἐπίσκοπος*, which originally applied to him who had the care of a single church, being now promoted to designate one who had "the care of all the churches" in a district. (Theod. ad 1 Tim. p. 652, Tom. iii. and Hilary ad Gal. i. 1.) Thus then, while the scriptural *names* have for good reasons been changed from, 1, Apostles; 2, Elders and Bishops; 3, Deacons; to 1, Bishops; 2, Priests; and 3, Deacons, the scriptural fact of three orders, with their scriptural functions, has remained unchanged. Eng. Ed.]



Hitherto we have gone on the supposition, that, from the beginning, one single community was formed in each town under the guidance of a senate of elders. Are we warranted in so supposing? An opposite hypothesis has, in more recent times, been advanced by several writers.\* According to this view, the converts to Christianity did not from the beginning, at least not in the larger towns, form themselves into one single community; but as Christianity was introduced from many different quarters and by different preachers, several *small* communities must have been founded independently of each other, and which, holding their assemblies at different places, long remained separate. It was only at a later date that, from the union of these several smaller bodies, one community was formed. Of such separate churches, previous to the formation of one community, indications, it is supposed, are found in those passages of St. Paul's epistles where one person, with the church assembling in his house, is greeted. Coloss. iv. 15; 1 Corith. xvi. 19; Rom. xvi. 5—14, 15; Philem. 2. Each of these little communities is supposed to have had its own presiding officer, and in this sense, it is argued, the monarchical was the original form of government in the church. According to one view, the disputes of these little bands and of their rulers one with another first caused a want to be felt of greater unity and closer connection under a common head, and thereby promoted the gradual formation of an episcopal government in the church. According to the other view, the name *ἐπίσκοποι* designated originally the function of these local presidents, and the name presbyters was applied to the college of the presidents of the several communities.

Such an atomical theory, however, corresponds certainly but very little with the essence of Christianity and of the Christian communion of the Spirit, which tended everywhere to fellowship and unity, and conveyed to all the consciousness of belonging together to one body.† Throughout the epistles of the New Testament, Christians of the same city appear to be

\* Dr. Kist of Leyden; see his *Essay on the Origin of the Episcopal Power in the Christian Church*, translated from the Dutch in Illgen's *Zeitschrift für die historische Theologie*, Bd. II., 2tes Stück, S. 48,—and Dr. von Baur, in his *Treatise on the Pastoral Letters*.

† Comp. what I have said in objection to this theory, in my *History of the Planting, &c.*, pp. 49 and 199; also Rothe, in his work *Über die Anfänge der Christlichen Kirche*, p. 197, &c.

associated together and to form one ἐκκλησία. This unity is never represented to us as something which is yet to take place, but as the original form, having its ground in the very essence of the Christian consciousness. On the contrary, the party divisions which, as in the Corinthian church, threatened to dissolve this unity, appear to be a morbid affection which had subsequently crept in. And if portions of the church sometimes formed separate assemblies in the houses of such individuals as possessed local conveniences for the purpose, or who, by preaching the word, were eminently qualified to edify those who assembled in their dwellings,\* yet it was at a later date that this first occurred, when the communities that were already regularly organised became more numerous. And even then those who met in such assemblies did not, by so doing, separate themselves from the great whole of the *community* which subsisted under the *guiding* senate. Of course, on this supposition, the distinction between bishops and presbyters, which, we think, has its sole ground in the above-mentioned theory, vanishes, and all the difference that we can admit is, that the latter was particularly the name of dignity, while the former name designated the function or particular sphere of activity.

These presbyters or bishops, then, as we variously call the same functionaries considered from different points of view, had the general superintendence of the communities, the direction of all affairs pertaining to the common interest; but the *office of teaching* was not committed exclusively to them. For, as we have already remarked, *all Christians* originally had the right of pouring out their hearts before the brethren, and of speaking in the public assemblies for their edification. It does not follow, however, *from this*, that *all* the members of a community were fitted for the *ordinary and regular office of teaching*. A distinction must be made between such a gift of teaching as, like every other cultivated talent, would be always constantly at the command of him who had once acquired it, and those effusions which, proceeding from the inspiration of the moment,† were connected with isolated and

\* Comp. my Hist. of the Planting, &c., p. 208.

† As prophecy, speaking with tongues. I will take this occasion to point out a passage in Irenæus which serves to confirm what I have so often advanced, that by the gift of tongues, was designated something



transient states of elevated feeling, and which, in an especial manner, belonged to the characteristic features of that primitive time of extraordinary mental excitement from above, when the divine life was first entering the terrestrial world, and when sudden transitions of conversion were naturally more frequent. On such transient awakenings and excitements of the religious consciousness alone it was impossible to depend for the necessary care in preserving, propagating, and advancing religious knowledge, and in defending the genuine, pure, and apostolical doctrine against the ever-threatening outbursts of corrupting tendencies, whether to Jewish or to pagan modes of thinking. Christianity required for its ministry knowledge no less than feeling. Wherever either of these two faculties predominated to the exclusion of the other, a disturbance of the Christian consciousness and life invariably ensued. That healthy and harmonious development, by virtue of which the exclusive preponderance of any single charisma was prevented, was one of the characteristic features of the apostolic period. Hence the watchfulness of the Apostle St. Paul to counteract any exclusive tendency of this kind which threatened to interfere with the harmonious and healthy development of the Christian life. We see this most distinctly in his first epistle to the Corinthians. Care, therefore, was to be taken in the several churches that, along with those utterances of extraordinary inspiration which were not attached to any particular function, there should never fail to be a supply of men qualified to satisfy the needs of knowledge, and capable of unfolding to others and of defending Christian truth,—the function denoted by the *λόγος γνώσεως* and the *χάρισμα διδασκαλίας*. The latter presupposed a certain previous cultivation of the understanding, a power of clear and discriminating thought, together with a certain facility in communicating it to others. The possession of all this, when once quickened by the agency of the Holy Spirit, became a charisma of this kind. Such as possessed this charisma were thereby fitted to take care

that differed only in degree, not in kind, from the prophetic gift,—an inspiration raised to a higher grade, and suppressing more entirely the ordinary consciousness. The passage in Acts 10, 46, relating to the gift of tongues, Irenæus, III. 12, 15, explains thus: while the Holy Ghost rested on them, they poured out their feelings in the manner of prophecy. *Τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου ἐπαναπαύοντος αὐτοῖς, προφητεύοντας αὐτοὺς ἀκηκόει.*

both for the continual preservation of sound doctrine within the church, and for the establishment and propagation of Christian knowledge, though not in such a manner as to exclude the coöperation of the others, who were at liberty to assist, each from his own position and according to his particular gift. Accordingly, in the apostolical age, the gift of teaching, χάρισμα διδασκαλίας, and the order of teachers, διδάσκαλοι, who were endowed with it, are spoken of as constituting an entirely distinct function and order. All the members of a church might, at particular seasons, feel an impulse to address the assembled brethren, or to break forth before them in acts of invocation or praise to God; but it was only a few that, possessing the χάρισμα διδασκαλίας, were διδάσκαλοι.

It is self-evident, however, that this faculty of teaching is a thing quite distinct from the talent for administering the outward concerns of the church, the χάρισμα κυβερνήσεως, which was particularly required for the office of assessor in the council,—the office *i. e.* of presbyter or bishop. Gifts, so different in their kind, could not always be united in the same individual. Though in the early apostolic church, all arbitrary and idle distinctions of ranks were unknown, and every office was considered simply with reference to the end it was to subserve and circumscribed by an inner necessity, still it seems to me that the function of teaching and that of church government, the function of a διδάσκαλος and that of a ποιμήν, as also the gifts requisite for both,\* were originally distinguished and kept separate from each other.†

In the development of these relations it is necessary to distinguish different steps, or stages. We should not be warranted in assuming, for the original form, everything which is found in the latter part of the apostolical times. The historical progress must of itself have introduced many changes; and it would be a mistake to suppose that every arrangement in the churches was the same when St. Paul wrote his later epistles as when he sent the earlier. Thus, with regard to the setting forth of doctrine, the following gradations are, I think, to be dis-

\* The χάρισμα διδασκαλίας and the χάρισμα κυβερνήσεως.

† Comp. for instance, Rom. 12: 7, 8, and the passages already noticed, for the purpose of seeing the distinction between the διδάσκων and the προστάς. [But such inferences to the difference of the thing itself from the separate mention of it would lead also to making the ἐλεήμων distinct from the διδάσκων, &c. *Eng. Ed.*]



tinguished in the progressive development.\* 1. It would naturally occur that individuals, qualified for it by their previous mental training, would, by virtue of this qualification, be especially called to the regular dispensation of doctrine. 2. Such persons were then commonly ordained and set apart as teachers of the church. 3. The functions of church-teacher and of elder became more closely connected with each other. It must have been held a salutary thing, as tending to the good order and quiet of the churches, that among their presiding officers there should also be some who possessed the talent for administering the office of teaching. And although in some cases, as in St. Paul's farewell address to the elders of the church of Ephesus, the care of maintaining pure doctrine was committed to the presbyters generally, yet it does not by any means necessarily follow that they were also invested with the office of teaching in the more restricted sense. For the Apostle in this passage may perhaps be speaking simply of one among the general cares of church government. But when, in the epistle to Titus, it is required of a bishop that he should not only himself hold fast the genuine pure doctrine of the gospel, but also be able to establish others in it, and convince the gainsayers, this certainly implies that the bishop must possess the gift of teaching. Indeed, under many circumstances, such as those, for example, which are alluded to in the above-mentioned epistle, this would be highly desirable on account of the danger which menaced the church from the spread of erroneous doctrines, which required to be met by the paternal authority of elders, not more than by their oral teaching. So, too, in the first epistle to Timothy (v. 17), those of the presbyters who, to the talent of government, *κυβέρνησις*, could unite also that of teaching, *διδασκαλία*, are counted worthy of double honour; and the prominence here given to each may perhaps be regarded as another proof that the two were not *necessarily* and *always* united.†

Besides these we find only one other church office in the apostolic age, that of deacons. The duties of this office were

\* See my Hist. of the Planting, &c., p. 210.

† [Of this much disputed passage it will be sufficient to observe that it is not clear from it whether it speaks of two distinct officers or of two duties of the same officer. The question must be decided by other passages which are in favour of the latter interpretation. See Guericke, Christian Antiquities, p. 31.]

at first only external, as, according to Acts vi., it was instituted to assist in the distribution of alms. The care of providing for the poor and sick members of the church, to which many other external duties were afterwards added, was the special business of this office. Besides the deacons, there were also deaconesses, for the care of the female portion of the community, because the free access of men to the female sex might excite suspicion and give offence, especially in the East, where the sexes are so carefully separated. Although, in conformity with their natural vocation, the women were excluded from the offices of teaching and governing in the church, yet the peculiar qualities of the sex were in this way now claimed as special gifts for the service of the church. By the means of such deaconesses the gospel could be introduced into the bosom of families, where, from the customs of the East, no man could gain admittance.\* As Christian wives, too, and mothers of tried experience in all the duties of their sex, they were also bound to assist the younger women with their counsel and encouragement.†

As regards the election to these offices, we have no sufficient information to enable us to decide how it was managed in the early apostolic times. Indeed it is quite possible different circumstances may have often led to a different method of procedure. As, in the institution of deacons, the apostles allowed the church itself to choose, and as this was also the case when deputies were to be chosen to attend the apostles in the name of the church (2 Corinth. viii. 19), we might argue that a similar course was pursued in filling the other offices of the church. Yet it is possible that in many cases the apostles themselves, where as yet they could not sufficiently confide in the spirit of the newly formed communities, conferred the important office of presbyter on such as in their judgment, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, appeared to be the fittest persons. *Their* choice, moreover, would above every other deserve the confidence of the church (comp. Acts xiv. 23; Titus i. 5). Still, when St. Paul empowers Titus to

\* As a proof, see the words of Clement of Alexandria (St. l. III. p. 448) respecting Christian women: Δι' ὧν καὶ εἰς τὴν γυναικωνίτιν ἀδίαβλήτως παρσιεύοντο ἡ τοῦ κυρίου διδασκαλία.

† Tertull. de virginib. velandis, c. 9: Ut experimentis omnium affectuum structæ, facile norint cæteras et consilio et solatio juvare; et ut nihilominus ea decurrerint, per quæ femina probari potest.



appoint rulers of the church, such as should possess the requisite qualifications, nothing is *thereby* decided as to the mode of choice, nor is a choice by the community itself *thereby* necessarily excluded. The following seems to have been the regular course: the offices of the church were intrusted in preference to the first converts, provided that in other respects they possessed the requisite qualifications (1 Corinth. vi. 15).\* Clement of Rome cites the following rule, as one which had been handed down from the apostles, relative to the appointment of church offices; "*that persons should be appointed to them by approved men, the whole church consenting.*" The general practice may have been for the presbyters themselves, in case of a vacancy, to propose some one to the church in place of the deceased, and leave it to the whole body either to ratify or annul their selection for definite reasons.† Wherever such asking for the assent of the whole church had not become a mere formality, this mode of filling the offices had the salutary effect of causing the votes of the majority to be guided by those capable of judging and of suppressing divisions; while at the same time no one was obtruded on the community who would not be welcome to them.

Again, as regards the relation in which these presbyters stood to their several churches, they were not designed to be absolute monarchs, but to act as presiding officers and guides of an ecclesiastical republic; consequently to conduct all things with the coöperation of the communities whose ministers and not masters they were. In this light the apostles seem to have regarded this relation when they addressed their epistles, which treat not barely of matters of doctrine, but of such as concern the life and discipline of the church, not only to the rulers of the churches, but to the entire communities. When the Apostle St. Paul pronounces a sentence of excommunication from the fellowship of the church, he speaks of himself as united in spirit with the whole community (1 Corinth. v. 4), assuming that, in a matter of such common concern, the concurrence of the whole church would as a rule be beneficial.

\* So also Clement of Rome (cap. 42) says of the Apostles: Κατὰ χώραν καὶ πόλεις κηρύσσοντες καθίστανον τὰς ἀπαρχὰς αὐτῶν, δοκιμάσαντες τῷ πνεύματι εἰς ἐπισκόπους καὶ διακόνους μελλόντων πιστεύειν.

† Clement, cap. 44: Τοὺς κατασταθέντας ὑπὸ τῶν ἀποστόλων ἢ μεταξὺ ἐφ' ἑτέρων ἐλλογίμων ἀνδρῶν, συνευδοκησάσης τῆς ἐκκλησίας πάσης.

*B. Changes in the Constitution of the Christian Church  
after the age of the Apostles.*

The changes which the Constitution of the Christian church underwent during this period related especially to the three following particulars: 1. The distinction of bishops from presbyters, and the gradual development of the monarchico-episcopal church government; 2. The distinction of the clergy from the laity, and the formation of a sacerdotal caste, in contradiction to the evangelical idea of the Christian priesthood; 3. The multiplication of church offices.

As to the first of these particulars, we are, it is true, devoid of everything like exact and full information respecting the manner in which the change took place in individual cases; the general matter, however, may be made very clear by analogy. It was natural that, as the presbyters constituted a deliberative assembly, one of their number should ere long assume the presidency. This was perhaps so arranged as to follow some law of rotation, so that the presidency would pass from one to the other. It is possible that in many places such was the original arrangement. Yet we find no trace in history, at least, of anything of the kind. But then, as we have already observed, there is, on the other hand, no vestige of the presidency over the presbyterial college having been originally distinguished by any special name. However the case may have been as to this point originally, our information of the institutions existing in the second century enables us to infer that very soon after the apostolic age the standing office of president of the presbyters must have been formed; and that to him, as having preëminently the oversight of all, there was given the special name of *Ἐπίσκοπος*, which thus distinguished him from the other presbyters. Thus the name came at length to be applied exclusively to this presbyter, while the name presbyter remained common to all; for the bishops, as presiding presbyters, had as yet no other official character than that of presbyters. They were only *Primi inter pares*.\*

\* Many of the later fathers still have a right understanding of this process of the matter. Hilar. in ep. I. ad Timoth. c. 3: *Omnis episcopus presbyter, non tamen omnis presbyter episcopus; hic enim episcopus est, qui inter presbyteros primus est.* Jerome (146, ad Evangel.) says



An aristocratic constitution will ever find it easy, by various gradual changes, to pass into the monarchical; and wherever a need is once felt of guidance by the energy and authority of an individual, circumstances will tend beyond all else to bring about such a revolution. It may have been circumstances of this kind which, at the close of the first and the opening of the second century, tended to promote the supremacy of the president of the council of elders, and to procure for him a distinctive title, as the general overseer. Even in the latter years of St. Paul's labours we see many things taking a different shape from what they had had originally. It cannot, therefore, appear strange if, in the constitution of the church, other changes were introduced by the altered circumstances of the times immediately succeeding those of St. Paul or St. John. Then ensued those strongly marked oppositions and schisms, those dangers with which primitive Christianity was menaced by the corruptions which various foreign elements had engendered.\* It was these dangers that had called the Apostle St. John to Asia Minor, and induced him to make this country the seat of his last labours. Amidst circumstances so embarrassing, amidst conflicts so severe from within and from without (for it was now that the first edict against the Christians was published by Trajan), the influence of individuals distinguished for piety, firmness, and activity, would be particularly felt, and the general danger would increase its authority. Thus the paramount authority of the individuals who, as moderators over the college of presbyters, were denominated bishops, might perhaps have grown up insensibly

that it had been the practice in the Alexandrian church, until the times of the bishops Hierocles and Dionysius, in the middle of the third century, for the presbyters to choose one of their own number as a president and call him bishop. And so also there may be some foundation of truth in the account of Eutychius, though it may not be wholly true, and must be chronologically false. This person, who was patriarch of Alexandria in the first half of the tenth century, relates, that in the Alexandrian church, up to the time of the bishop Alexander, in the beginning of the fourth century, the following arrangement had existed: there was a college of twelve presbyters, one of whom presided over the rest as bishop, and these presbyters always chose their bishop out of their own number, and the other eleven ordained him.

\* These I have more fully unfolded in my History of the Planting, &c., Vol. II.

out of the circumstances of the times in which the Christian communities were multiplied. This may have been the case even in the absence of any *intentional* design of remodelling the earlier constitution of the church. It seems to me to be in favour of this view that, till late in the second century, we still find the names "presbyter" and "bishop" interchanged. It may be that, as the labours of St. John in Asia Minor had a great influence generally on the subsequent development of the church, so also they may have had great weight in this matter especially, since the circumstances of the times induced him to intrust to certain individual presbyters, who had proved themselves worthy of his special confidence, the chief care of maintaining pure doctrine amidst the prevailing corruptions, of warding off those threatening dangers, and of keeping an oversight over the whole church. The tradition current at the end of the second century, of individuals having been placed at the head of different churches by this apostle, and by him consecrated bishops, may have been derived from such an origin. This may perhaps be the whole truth lying at the bottom of this report, and there would be no necessity of inferring from this circumstance that an episcopate was designedly founded by this apostle.\*

This relation of the bishops to the presbyters we may trace down to the end of the second century. It is on this account that Irenæus sometimes uses the names "bishop" and "pres-

\* There is no evidence to establish any such supposition; for to indefinite traditions the force of evidence cannot be ascribed. In the so-called epistles of Ignatius I perceive, besides that which took its shape without any preconceived design, an evident purpose. As the tradition of Ignatius' journey to Rome, where he was to be thrown to the wild beasts, appears to me, for reasons already alleged, extremely liable to suspicion; so his letters, which presuppose the truth of this story, inspire me with as little confidence in their authenticity. [Both the authenticity of the journey to Rome and the genuineness of the epistles are maintained by Guerike, a Lutheran, like Neander. Hdbk. d. Kirchengesch. Bd. I.] That a man with death immediately before him could have nothing to say more befitting than such things about obedience to the bishops, is inconceivable to my mind; especially when I go back to the time when these letters profess to have been written. But even supposing the Apostle St. John did institute the order of bishops, for the purpose of satisfying a necessity of the times, still it would by no means follow that this was a form of church government either necessary or beneficial for *all times*.



byter " as synonymous, and at others distinguishes the bishops, as presidents, from the presbyters.\* Tertullian also calls the presidents of the Christian churches by the general name of Seniores, including under this title both bishops and presbyters;† though elsewhere in the writings of this father a strong distinction is drawn between bishops and presbyters. In many respects Tertullian may be considered as standing on the boundary line between an old and a new era in the Christian church.

The novel and violent conflicts, internal as well as external, which, in this and the following century, the church had to encounter, might also contribute anew to foster the monarchical element in the constitution of the church. As late however as the third century, the presbyters still maintained their own footing as a college of counsellors at the side of the bishops, and the latter undertook nothing of importance without assembling the council of presbyters.‡ When, by his flight during the persecution, Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, was separated from his community, if he had any business to transact, he immediately communicated it to his presbyters who had remained behind, and apologised to them whenever he was obliged to decide any matter without consulting them. He declares it to be his invariable principle to do nothing without their advice.§ Keeping in mind the original relation of the presbyters to the bishops, he calls them his *Compresbyteros*. Since then, in the constitution of the church, two elements met together,—the aristocratic and monarchical,—a conflict between them was almost inevitable. The bishops would consider themselves

\* The two names are used synonymously (l. IV. 26) where the *successio episcopatus* is given to the *presbyteris*. In l. III. 14, he distinguishes them. If in Acts 20, 17, when Paul sends for the presbyters of the churches of Asia Minor, Irenæus reckons among them the bishops, he does so perhaps from the opinion that the latter were no more than presiding elders; in Miletio convocatis episcopis et presbyteris. The confusion spread over the whole subject of the succession of the first Romish bishops may doubtless be owing to the fact that these names were not originally distinguished, and hence several might bear at the same time the titles of bishops or presbyters.

† Apologet. c. 39 : Præsident probati quique *seniores*.

‡ Presbyterium contrahere.

§ A primordio episcopatus mei statui, nihil sine consilio vestro mea privatim sententia gerere.—Sicut honor mutuus poscit, in commune tractabimus. Ep. 5.

as invested with supreme power in the guidance of the church, and would naturally seek to maintain this authority. The presbyters would be unwilling to concede to them such power, and would seek to make themselves again independent. These struggles between the presbyterial and episcopal systems are perhaps the most important phenomena in the development of the church during the third century. Many presbyters made a capricious use of their power, which was most prejudicial to the discipline and good order of the church. Divisions arose, of which we shall have hereafter to speak more particularly; and out of these troubles the authority of the bishops, who closely united among themselves, came victorious over the presbyters, who opposed them single handed. The energy and activity of a Cyprian contributed in no small measure to promote this victory; but it would both be to wrong him and to change the right point of view for the whole matter, if we were to charge him with having entertained from the first a systematic design of elevating the episcopal order. For generally, in matters of this sort, it is seldom possible for a single individual to fashion the circumstances of a whole period into conformity with his own ambitious designs of aggrandizement. Without being conscious of any plan, Cyprian herein acted in the spirit of a whole party and of a tendency belonging to the entire church in his time. He acted as the representative of the episcopal system, whose conflict with the presbyterian policy had its ground in the whole development of the church. The quarrels of the presbyterian parties among themselves were certainly likely to prove injurious to discipline and good order in the churches. The triumph of the episcopal system undoubtedly promoted unity, order, and tranquillity. But, on the other hand, it was unfavourable to the free development of the life of the church; and while the latter promoted the formation of a priesthood foreign to the essence of that development of the kingdom of God which the New Testament sets forth, on the other hand a revolution of sentiment which had already been prepared—an altered view of the idea of the priesthood—had no small influence on the development of the episcopal system. Thus does this change of the original constitution of the Christian communities stand intimately connected with another and still more radical change,—*the formation of a sacerdotal*



*caste in the Christian church.* Without doubt many a change in the relations of the church might flow naturally out of the historical course of development, without being any evidence of such a revolution in the general sentiments of Christians, or being at all connected with it. The times of the first Christian inspiration by that effusion of the Spirit which cast into the shade all differences of mental culture were quickly succeeded by a time when the human element grew to great importance in the progressive advancement of the church. Differences in the degree of education and of Christian knowledge now became more strongly marked; and on this account it might happen that the guidance of church affairs was surrendered more exclusively to the above-mentioned church senate, and the edification of the church by the word confined more entirely to those who had distinguished themselves as teachers. But this natural consequence of the historical course of things was unquestionably soon associated with an idea alien to the Christian economy which, continually giving a wider development to its original germ, was to last through many centuries.

Out of the husk of Judaism Christianity had evolved itself to freedom and independence,—had stripped off the forms in which it first sprang up, and within which the new spirit lay at first concealed, until by its own inherent power it broke through them. This development belonged more particularly to the Pauline position, from which proceeded the form of the church in the Gentile world. In the struggle with the Jewish elements which opposed the free development of Christianity, this principle had triumphantly made its way. In the churches of pagan Christians the new creation stood forth completely unfolded; but the Jewish principle, which had been vanquished, pressed in once more from another quarter. Humanity was as yet incapable of maintaining itself at the lofty position of pure spiritual religion. The Jewish position was better adapted to the mass, which needed first to be trained before it could apprehend Christianity in its purity,—needed to be disabused from paganism. Out of Christianity, now become independent, a principle once more sprang forth akin to the principles of the Old Testament,—a new *outward shaping* of the kingdom of God, a new discipline of the law which one day was to serve for the training of rude nations, a

new tutorship for the spirit of humanity until it should arrive at the maturity of the perfect manhood in Christ. This investiture of the Christian spirit in a form nearly akin to the position arrived at in the Old Testament, could not fail, after the fruitful principle had once made its appearance, to unfold itself more and more, and to bring to light one after another all the consequences which it involved; but there also began with it a reaction of the Christian consciousness as it yearned after freedom, which was continually bursting forth anew in an endless variety of appearances, until it attained its triumph at the Reformation.\*

While the great principle of the New Testament in unfolding the kingdom of God from within consisted of the union with Christ, brought about after the like *immediate* manner in all, by faith, the introduction of the Old Testament position, in giving an outward existence to the kingdom of God, went on the assumption that an *outward mediation was necessary* in order to its establishment in the world. Such a mediation was to be formed by a priesthood modelled after that of the Old Testament. The universal priesthood, grounded on the common and immediate relation in which all believers stood to Christ as the source of the divine life, was repressed by the spread of the idea that there is a special mediatory priesthood attached to a distinct order. This recasting of the Christian spirit in the form of the Old Testament did not, it is true, take place everywhere in exactly the same manner. Where some Jewish element chiefly predominated, it might easily

\* [How little in unison with the principles of the Reformation Neander's views are on the subject of episcopacy will appear from the following extracts: "Ecclesiastical government is holy and useful, so that it is *necessary* that there should be bishops superior to other ministers." — *Articles sent into France to Cardinal du Bellay by the Lutherans and Melancthon*. "The church can never be better governed and preserved than when we all live under one head, Jesus Christ, and all bishops equal in office, though unequal in gifts, are most perfectly united in diligence, concord of doctrine, &c. . . . The Apostles were equal, and afterwards the bishops in all Christendom, until the pope raised his head above all." — *Luther: Articles of Smalcalde, pars ii. Art. IV*. Even Calvin (*Tract. de Reform. Eccles.*) "held them to be worthy of anathema who would not submit to truly Christian bishops;" while Beza accounts it no less than madness to reject all the order of bishops, &c.— See Durel's *Government in the Reformed Churches beyond the Seas*, pp. 101-7.]

But Neander is objecting to priests  
not to Episcopal Bishops.



have grown up out of it; \* where, as among the Gentile Christians, the Pauline element had unfolded itself at first in opposition to the Jewish, even there the Christian spirit, which had grown up to independence, unable, in consequence of a growing tendency within itself, to maintain itself at this lofty position, soon adopted this alien position of Judaism. Of such a change in the Christian mode of thinking we have as early a witness as Tertullian, for he calls the bishop *summus sacerdos*,† a title certainly not invented by him, but which had been adopted from a mode both of speaking and thinking prevalent in a portion at least of the church. Such an appellation implies that men had already begun to compare the presbyters with the priests, the deacons or spiritual persons generally with the Levites. It must be at once evident how greatly such a false comparison of the Christian priesthood with the Jewish must have facilitated the elevation of the episcopacy over the presbyterial office. In general the more they degenerated from the evangelical to the Jewish point of view the more must the original free constitution of the several churches become also changed. We find Cyprian, early as was his date, completely imbued with this intermixture of the Old and the New Testament notions.

In the names, indeed, by which the holders of church offices were at first distinguished from the rest of the community, no trace of this intermixture might as yet be found. The Latin expression "*ordo*" simply denoted the guiding senate of the Christian people (the plebs). The Greek words *κλῆρος*, *κληρικοί*, had, it is true, as early as Cyprian's time, had grafted on them the unevangelical sense of persons preëminently consecrated to God, like the Levites of the Old Testament—men employed on the affairs of religion

\* Thus in the Jewish-Christian apocryphal writing called the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs (in the Testament III. of Levi, c. 8) it is promised of the Messiah that he should found a new priesthood among the pagan nations: *ποιήσει ἱερατεῖαν νέαν εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη*. Whether in the letter of Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus, a contemporary of Irenæus (cited in Euseb. l. V. c. 24), the Apostle St. John be meant by the *ἱερεὺς τὸ πῖταλον πεφορηκώς*, as standing at the head of the government of the church in Asia Minor, may indeed be doubted. The phrase might also be used simply to designate the highest position of the spiritual priesthood in the witnessing of the faith. (See Testament. Levi, c. 8: *πίταλον τῆς πίστεως*.)

† De Baptismo, c. 17.

to the exclusion of all earthly concerns, and who did not, like others, gain their livelihood by worldly employments, but who, for the very reason that in order to benefit others they had their conversation with God alone, were supported by the rest, in the same manner as the Levites, in the division of the lands, had no portion assigned them, but had the Lord for their inheritance, and received tithes from the rest in return for their care of the public worship, οἱ εἰσιν ὁ κληρὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, or ὧν ὁ κληρὸς ὁ θεός ἐστι. See Deuteron. c. 18. This notion now of a peculiar people of God, (α κληρὸς τοῦ θεοῦ,) applied distinctively to a particular order of men among the Christians, is wholly foreign to the original Christian mind. For according to this, all Christians should be a people consecrated to God, α κληρὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, and even all their earthly callings ought to be sanctified by the temper in which they are discharged. Their whole life and conduct bearing one continued reference to Christ, the great High Priest of humanity, having its root in the consciousness of redemption, and witnessing it in its effects, should hence become a consecrated thank-offering and a spiritual service (α λογικὴ λατρεία). Such was the original evangelical idea. It may be questioned, however, whether that other notion, so much at variance with the primitive Christian idea, was actually associated from the first with the appellation κληρικοί as applied to the clergy. If we trace the history of its usage, it becomes much more probable that this sense was brought into the word at some later period, when a change had taken place in the Christian mode of thinking, and the original sense was forgotten. The word κληρὸς signified originally the place in the church which by God's providence had been allotted to each, or the choice of the people directed by that providence; hence the church officers were particularly denominated κληροί, and the persons chosen to them κληρικοί.\*

\* Thus we may see how in these words the more restricted notion of casting lots might be lost, though elsewhere the ἀρχαὶ κληρωταί are opposed to the ἀρχαῖς χειροτονήταις. So at first, in Acts 1, 17: κληρὸς τῆς διακονίας; in Irenæus III. 3: κληροῦσθαι τὴν ἐπισκοπὴν. Clemens Alex. Quis dives salv. c. 42, employs κληρὸς and κληροῦν with reciprocal reference to each other. Ignat. ep. Ephes. c. 11: κληρὸς Ἐφεσίων, by which he understands the collective body of Christians in that place. It is true, the relations observed in the Old Testament could be found applied to the Christian church in as early a writer as Clemens of Rome



But although the pure evangelical idea of the priesthood was continually more and more obscured and driven into the background by the prevalence of unevangelical views, it was nevertheless too deeply rooted in the very essence of Christianity to be totally suppressed. In the times of Tertullian who marked as it were the boundary between these two views, we still find many significant traces of the reaction which the primitive Christian conviction of the universal priesthood, and the general rights founded thereon, exerted against the arrogated power of that particular priesthood which had recently begun to form itself on the model of the Old Testament. In his work on Baptism, written before he went over to Montanism, Tertullian, in reference to this matter, distinguishes between *divine right* and *human order*. "Considered in itself," he says, "the laity also have a right to administer the sacraments and to teach in the church. The word of God and the sacraments were by God's grace *communicated to all*, and may therefore be communicated *by all Christians* as instruments of God's grace. But the question here is not merely what is lawful in general, but also what is expedient under existing circumstances. We may here apply the words of St. Paul, 'All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient.' From regard therefore to the necessary order of the church, the laity ought to exercise their priestly rights in administering the sacraments only when time and circumstances require it."\*

Sometimes, in their conflict with the clergy, the laity made good their original priestly rights, as follows I think from the words of Tertullian the *Montanist*, where in a certain case he requires the laity, if they would have the same rights with the clergy, to bind themselves to the same duties; and

(c. 40), but to my mind there can be no doubt but that this epistle, as well as that of Ignatius (although in a less degree) had suffered interpolation from a hierarchical interest. In other passages of the same epistle we meet, on the contrary, with the freer spirit of the original presbyterial constitution of the church. How simply, without any mixture of hierarchical display, is the appointment of bishops or presbyters, and of deacons, spoken of in the 42nd chapter! A disciple of the Apostle Paul, moreover, is the last person whom we should expect to find thus confounding together the points of view peculiar to the Old and to the New Testaments.

\* De Baptismo, c. 17.

where in a sarcastic tone he says of them,\* “When we exalt and inflate ourselves against the clergy, then we are all one, we are all priests, since he has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father.” Rev. 1, 6.

Although the office of teaching in the congregation was confined more and more to the bishops and presbyters, we nevertheless still find many traces of that original equality of spiritual rights among all Christians. Towards the middle of the third century two bishops in Palestine did not scruple to allow the learned Origen, although he had as yet received no ordination, to expound the scriptures before their people; and when reproved by Demetrius, bishop of Alexandria, who was strongly inclined to hierarchy, they appealed in their defence to the practice of many bishops of the East who had even invited competent laymen to preach.† Even in the spurious Apostolic Constitutions themselves, otherwise deeply tinged with the hierarchical spirit, and, indeed, compiled from time to time out of the most heterogeneous elements, there is an ordinance assigned to the Apostle St. Paul to this effect:‡ “*If any man, though a layman, is skilful in expounding doctrine, and of reputable life, he may be allowed to teach, for all must be taught of God.*”

At first, those who held offices in the church continued, in all probability, to exercise their former trades and occupations for the support of themselves and their families. The several communities, composed for the most part of poor members, would scarcely be able to provide for their presbyters and deacons, especially as they had from the first so many other demands on the church chest, the support, viz., of helpless widows and orphans, of the poor and the sick. It might indeed happen that the presbyters belonged to the richer class of the community, and this must have been often the case, since, besides other qualifications, their office required a cer-

\* De Monogamia, c. 12. [Tertullian’s meaning will be best judged of from the original. His words are, “Si non omnes Monogamiæ tenentur unde Monogami in clerum? An ordo aliquis seorsum debet institui Monogamorum de quo adlectio fiat in clerum? Sed quum extollimur et inflamur adversus clerum, tunc unum sumus, tunc omnes sacerdotes, quia sacerdotes nos Deo et Patri fecit; quum ad peræquationem disciplinæ sacerdotalis provocamur, deponimus infulas et impares sumus.”—*Eng. Ed.*]

† Euseb. l. VI. c. 19.

‡ L. VIII. c. 32.



tain degree of worldly education, and this was more likely to be found in the higher or middle class than in the lower orders. As the presbyters, or bishops, (1 Timothy 3, 2,) were to be patterns to other Christians of hospitality, this also implies that they belonged to the better class, of whom the number was small in the first communities,—and how could such persons be induced to support themselves on the scanty earnings of the poor! The Apostle Paul does, indeed, declare that [travelling]\* preachers of the gospel are warranted in expecting that those for whose spiritual necessities they laboured should provide for their bodily wants; but it cannot be inferred from this that the case was the same with regard to the local officers of the churches. It would be difficult for the former to unite the labours necessary for their own maintenance with the duties of their spiritual calling, although the self-denial of a Paul rendered this also possible. The local officers, on the contrary, might easily unite the labours necessary for their maintenance with the discharge of their official functions, and the simple way of thinking among the primitive Christians might perhaps see nothing repulsive in such a union; convinced as they were that every earthly business could and should be sanctified by the temper with which it was pursued, and knowing that even an apostle had prosecuted a worldly calling in connection with the preaching of the gospel. But when the communities grew larger, and the duties of church officers increased, especially when the office of teaching was confined for the most part to the presbyters; when the calling of the spiritual class, if rightly discharged, required all their time and exertions, it became often impossible for them to provide, at the same time, for their own support; and besides, the wealthier communities were now in a condition to maintain them. Of the common fund which was raised by the voluntary contributions of the people every Lord's day, or, as in the North African church, on the first Sunday of every month,† a part was appropriated for the maintenance of the clergy.

\* [St. Paul nowhere speaks of any special privilege of travelling preachers, but he does speak of all as having a right to a maintenance, and to "forbear working." 1 Cor. ix. 1-14.]

† The *divisiones mensuræ*, as salaries for the clergy in this church, answer to the monthly collections.

It was now sought expressly to withdraw the clergy from all worldly employments; and before the close of the third century they were strictly forbidden to undertake any such business, even a wardship.\* This regulation may certainly have been founded in reason, and had a very salutary end in view, namely, to prevent the clergy forgetting their spiritual calling and the business of the church. We see from Cyprian's book *de Lapsis*,† how much even then the spirit of the world had made its way during long periods of tranquillity among the bishops, who, immersed in secular pursuits, neglected their spiritual concerns and the interests of their flocks. But assuredly some other cause must have subsequently coöperated in establishing an opinion that the administration of the offices of the church was absolutely irreconcilable with worldly employments, and that the clergy must be kept aloof from them.

When the idea of the universal Christian priesthood was more and more lost sight of, that of the priestly consecration of the whole life, which was enjoined on all Christians, was also forgotten. As, in contradiction to the original Christian consciousness, a distinction had been drawn between a particular priesthood and the universal and ordinary calling of all Christians, so they now contrasted with each other a spiritual and a secular province of life and action; notwithstanding Christ had exalted the *entire* earthly existence to a spiritual life. And from this view of the matter it would seem that it was deemed necessary to forbid the priestly clergy, as set apart for God's service, to have any contact with the world and the things of the world. We have, then, here the germ out of which sprang at length the medieval view of the priesthood, with its law of celibacy. But by this outward removal

\* Cyprian, ep. 66, to the community at Furnæ.

† Also from the *Instructiones* of his contemporary, Commodianus, c. 69: *Reddatur in culpa pastor sæcularia servans* (who gives himself up to secular business), and from Can. 18 of the council of Elvira (Illiberis), in the year 305: *Episcopi, presbyteri et diaconi de locis suis negotiandi causa non discedant, nec circumeuntes provincias quæstuosas nundinas sectentur*. Yet even here it is still supposed that they may in many cases be obliged so to do, "*ad victum sibi conquirendum*," where, perhaps, though they had a salary, they yet received no pay in *money*. But in these cases they were to conduct their business by the agency of a son, a freed man, or some person hired for the purpose, and never beyond the bounds of their own province.



of secular things a worldly spirit could not be charmed away from the clergy, nor the sense for divine things awakened in them. This external renunciation of the world was only too likely to introduce into the heart a spiritual pride, hiding the worldly mind under this mask. Cyprian, in the above-mentioned letter,\* quotes 2 Timoth. 2, 4, in support of this prohibition. But he could not but feel what, especially at this time, when the universal calling of Christians was commonly regarded as a *militia Christi*, must have immediately occurred to every one, that these words applied equally to all, who, as soldiers of Christ, were bound to be faithful in the discharge of their duty, and to guard against every foreign and worldly thing that might impede their service. It is with such an acknowledgment that he concludes: "As this was said of all Christians, how much rather must those keep themselves unentangled with worldly matters, who, occupied with divine and spiritual things, ought not to depart from the church, nor have time for earthly and secular employments!" The clergy, then, in obedience to this apostolic rule, were merely to shine forth as patterns to all others, by avoiding whatever was foreign to their vocation, and might turn them away from a faithful discharge of it. And yet that false opposition between the secular and the spiritual, which we have already spoken of, contrived to find even here support for itself.

In respect to the election to the offices of the church, the ancient principle was still adhered to, that the consent of the community was necessary to the validity of the election, every one being at liberty to offer reasons against it. The emperor Alexander Severus was aware of this regulation in the Christian church, and referred to it in support of his wish to introduce a similar practice in the appointment of civil officers in the provinces.† When Cyprian, during his separation from his church by evil circumstances, nominated to church offices

\* Ep. 66.

† *Æl. Lamprid. vit. c. 45*: Grave esse, cum id Christiani et *Judæi*, (a customary form then of choosing presiding officers, even among the Jews,) facerent in prædicandis sacerdotibus, qui ordinandi sunt, non fieri in provinciarum rectoribus, quibus et fortunæ hominum committerentur et capita. From which language it is also apparent how far the man who so expressed himself was from doing homage to the Christian church.

individuals about his own person, who had distinguished themselves in the persecution, he apologised, both to the laity and to the clergy, for this arbitrary procedure, which had been forced upon him by the necessity of the times, and thus writes to both : \* “ We are accustomed to call you together for counsel whenever any are to be consecrated to sacred offices, and to weigh the character and claims of each candidate in common deliberation.”

The same principle was also observed in appointments to the episcopal office. In the third century it was the prevailing custom (which, consequently, Cyprian derived from apostolic tradition) for the bishops of the province, together with the clergy of the vacant diocese, to proceed to the election in the presence of the community, who, as having witnessed the life and conversation of every individual on whom the choice might fall, could therefore give the surest testimony of his character. Cyprian conceded to the community the right of choosing worthy bishops, or of rejecting unworthy ones.† This right of approving or rejecting was not a mere formality. It sometimes happened that, before the usual arrangements for an election could be made, a bishop was proclaimed by the voice of the community. Thus there might possibly arise a discord between the will of the community and that of the majority of the clergy,—the source of many divisions.

In other affairs, also, of the church, the participation of the laity was not as yet wholly excluded. Cyprian declared that, from the commencement of his episcopal office, it had been his determination to do nothing without the consent of the community.‡ An affair of this kind, in which all were concerned, was the restoration of a fallen brother to the communion of the church ; and the examination connected therewith was to be conducted with the assistance of the whole community ; for, in Cyprian’s judgment, this respect was due to the faith of

\* Ep. 33.

† Cyprian thus writes, in the name of a synod, to the communities at Lyons and Astorga, ep. 68 : *Apostolica observatione servandum est, quod apud nos quoque et fere per provincias universas tenetur, ut ad ordinationes rite celebrandas, ad eam plebem, cui præpositus ordinatur, episcopi ejusdem provinciæ proximi quique convenient, et episcopus deligatur plebe præsentē, quæ singulorum vitam plenissime novit et uniuscujusque actum de ejus conversatione perspexit.*

‡ *Nihil sine consensu plebis gerere.* Ep. 5.



those who had steadfastly withstood persecution.\* There were besides individuals, who, though not belonging to the clerical order, had yet, through the respect which they personally enjoyed, obtained an influence in the management of church affairs, which even the clergy found it difficult to oppose. Such were the heroes of the faith, the confessors, who before pagan magistrates, in the face of tortures and death, or even under torture, had confessed the good confession. We shall hereafter, in speaking of the schisms of the church, have occasion to consider more particularly the extent of their influence.

A *third*, less important change in the constitution of the church was the multiplication of church offices. This was in part rendered necessary by the growth of the communities, and the consequent accumulation of business on the hands of the deacons, whose office had now to be relieved of many of its duties. In part, also, new matters of business in the churches of large capital towns required new offices for their discharge. In part, too, the new notions of the dignity of the clergy led to a belief that what had hitherto been regarded as the free gift of the Spirit to all or to individual Christians must be confined to a particular office in the service of the church. It must be clear from what has been said that none of these changes, which arose partly out of local circumstances, can be considered as universal. The following were the principal of these new offices: after the deacons came the subdeacons, who assisted the former in their mere secular duties; the lectores (*ἀνάγνωσται*), who had to read the scriptures in the congregation, and also to take care of the copies of them used on these occasions; a duty performed at first, probably, by the presbyters themselves, or by the deacons, as in later times the reading of the scriptures, particularly the *gospels*, still continued in many churches to be left to the deacons;—next, the acolyths (*ἀκόλουθοι*, acolythi), who, as the name indicates, waited on the bishops while discharging their official functions; the exorcistæ, who made prayer over those who were thought to be possessed by evil spirits (the *energumeni*); finally, the θυρωροὶ, πυλωροὶ, ostiarii, whose business it was to attend to

\* Præsente etiam stantium plebe, quibus et ipsis pro fide et timore suo honor habendus est. Ep. 13.

such outward matters as the cleansing and good order of the church, and the opening and closing of the doors.

The office of reader is, perhaps, the oldest among these. It is mentioned as early as the close of the second century by Tertullian.\* The others are mentioned together about the middle of the third century, and for the first time, in a letter of the Roman bishop Cornelius, cited by Eusebius.† The office of acolyth had its origin most probably in the hierarchical pomp of the Roman church. It did not find its way into the Greek church. The Greek name of the office is not inconsistent with this view of its origin; for the Greek language was in frequent use at Rome, and many of the Roman bishops were of Grecian extraction. As regards the office of exorcist, the end it was to accomplish—whether it was thought a work that might be performed by every Christian who, in humble reliance on Christianity as having overcome the power of evil, should call upon His name, or was regarded as a spiritual gift to certain individuals—had originally been looked upon as a work of the Holy Spirit independent of all outward institutions. But now the free working of the Spirit was to be confined to a formal, mechanical process. The spirit of the ancient church, preserved for a longer time in the East,‡ was rightly expressed, on the other hand, by the apostolic constitutions; “An exorcist cannot be chosen, for it is the gift of free grace.” §

Quitting the subject of the general constitution of the church, we now proceed to the forms of union by which the several churches were bound together.

\* Præscript. hæret. c. 41.

† L. VI. c. 43.

‡ In the letter of Firmilianus, bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, (Cyprian, ep. 75,) mention is made of the church exorcists. But Origen describes this sort of influence as something that was not confined to any determinate office, but wholly free. He considers the influence as a thing depending on the subjective piety of the individual that exercises it, in Matth. T. XIII. s. 7: *Εἴ ποτε δεῖσι περὶ θεραπείαν ἀσχολιῖσθαι ἡμᾶς τοιοῦτόν τι πεπονδός τις, μὴ δοκίζωμεν, μηδὲ ἐπιρωτῶμεν, μηδὲ λαλῶμεν ὡς ἀκούοντι τῷ ἀκαθάρτῃ πνεύματι, ἀλλὰ σχολάζοντες προσευχῇ καὶ νηστείᾳ, ἐπιτύχωμεν προσευχόμενοι περὶ τοῦ πεπονδός.*

§ L. VIII. c. 26: *Ὁὐ χειροτονεῖται, εὐνοίας γὰρ ἐκουσίῳ τὸ ἔπαθλον, καὶ χάριτος θεοῦ διὰ χριστοῦ.*



*Forms of union by which the individual communities were bound together.*

With the inner fellowship, Christianity established also, from the very first, a living outward union among its professors, by which its remotest members were brought near to each other. A determinate form was necessary to realize this union. And this form was naturally enough determined by the forms of social life under which Christianity first unfolded itself in the Roman empire. But for these existing institutions, a system of fraternal equality among the several communities would best have answered to the spirit of Christianity, and most surely have promoted its free, uncorrupted manifestation. External circumstances, however, soon gave rise to a system of subordination in the mutual relation of the several churches. This system, like every other form of society which had grown out of an historical development and contained nothing sinful, Christianity could safely appropriate to itself. Yet, since this relation was not sufficiently imbued with the free and free-making spirit of the gospel, by being carried out to an undue extent it tended to check and interrupt the development of Christian doctrine and the life of the church.

We have already observed that in many districts Christianity early extended itself to the open country. Now, wherever this happened, and the Christians in a village or country town were in sufficient numbers to form a separate church, it was most natural for these to choose at once their own presidents, presbyters, or bishops, who should be as independent as the presidents of the city churches. In the first centuries indeed it is impossible, from the want of authentic records, to adduce any instance of the fact; but in the fourth century we find, in many districts of the East, country-bishops, as they are called, (*χωρεπίσκοποι*,) who, beyond doubt, could trace back their origin to the oldest times; for in later periods, when the system of subordination among the churches was fully established, and the country churches were accustomed to receive their presidents from the city, no such relation *could have arisen*. On the contrary, the chorepiscopi, wherever they yet existed, seem to have entered into a struggle with those of the city for the *preservation of their independence*. However, as we have already observed, the more common case, in the diffu-

sion of Christianity, was for it to spread from the city to the country. As long, therefore, as the Christians in the immediate neighbourhood of the cities were few in number, they would most naturally repair on the Lord's day to the city in order to join the assemblies held there. But in process of time, when their numbers were sufficiently increased to form a church of their own, they allowed the bishop of the city church which they had been accustomed to frequent to set over them a presbyter, who was consequently for ever after subordinate to the city bishop. In this way the first greater union between city and country churches, which together formed one whole, was established in the church.\* In the larger cities it may also have become necessary to divide the city churches themselves, as was soon the case in Rome, where, according to the Roman bishop Cornelius, already referred to, there were in his time six-and-forty presbyters; though the statement of Optatus of Milevis, that Rome contained, in the beginning of the fourth century, more than forty churches, seems an exaggeration. Even in this case, it did not always happen that distinct and subordinate daughter-churches were formed by the side of, and subject to, the one episcopal Head and Mother church. Most frequently the community remained united as a whole; and only on Sundays and feast-days, when *one* building was insufficient to accommodate all the members, they were divided into several churches, where the different presbyters, according to a certain rotation, conducted the public worship. We must, however, distinctly admit, that, with regard to the early shaping of these incipient relations, nothing can be decided with certainty. In default of historical information on the subject, we can only infer respecting the past from what we find to have been the case in the succeeding times.

Again, as Christianity spread, for the most part, from the cities into the country, so, as a general rule, it extended itself from the principal cities (*μητροπόλεις*) to the provincial towns. Now, as the latter were politically subordinate to the former, it was only natural that a close bond of union and subordinate relation should gradually be formed in like manner between the churches of the provincial towns and those of the principal

\* The presbyters of whom Cyprian, at his examination before the proconsul, said, "*invenientur in civitatibus suis*," were such presidents of country churches.



city or metropolis. The churches of a province constituted a whole, at the head of which stood the church of the metropolis. The bishop of this became, in relation to the other bishops of the province, *Primus inter pares*. Yet, owing to local causes, this relation did not everywhere unfold itself in the same way, and at the present period was confined for the most part to the East.

A like relation to that between these metropolitan cities and the provincial towns existed between the latter and the capitals of the larger divisions of the Roman empire,—as seats of government and the channels of commercial and general intercourse. It was from such larger capitals that Christianity was propagated through whole divisions of the vast empire; it was in them that the apostles themselves had orally preached the gospel, founded churches, and appointed over them their presiding officers; and to the churches here established their epistles were written. Hence, these churches, which went under the name of *ecclesiæ*, *sedes apostolicæ*, *matrices ecclesiæ*, were held in peculiar veneration. When any controversy arose with regard to church discipline or doctrine, the first inquiry was, How is the matter regarded in these communities where the principles taught on the spot by the apostles themselves have been faithfully preserved from one generation to another? Such *ecclesiæ apostolicæ* were especially Rome, Antioch, Alexandria, Ephesus, Corinth.

But if this was true of the churches in the great capital cities, it applied in a preëminent degree to the church of Rome, the great capital of the world. The legend that St. Peter, as well as St. Paul, died as a martyr at Rome, is not, it is true, placed above all doubt; it is, however, older than the attempt to exalt the Roman church through the primacy of its founder the Apostle St. Peter. No doubt the origin of such a legend does admit of being explained: a desire to confute the Jews and Gnostics, who endeavoured to make out a difference between these two great apostles, might have led to an attempt to show that they were united even in a common martyrdom in the capital of the world. It may too have grown out of the stories of the contest between St. Peter and Simon Magus. But these conjectures are certainly not sufficient to warrant us in absolutely denying its truth, when so high an antiquity speaks in favour of it. As to the many difficulties which present themselves in relation to the concatenation

of events, they may have their ground in the deficiency of our historical information.\* At all events, the belief universally diffused that these two great apostles had taught in the Roman church, and honoured it by their martyrdom, contributed to promote its authority. From Rome the larger portion of the West had received the gospel; from Rome the common interests of Christianity could best be promoted throughout the whole extent of the Roman empire. The Roman bishops, heads of the wealthiest community, were early known and distinguished in the most distant lands for their liberal benefactions to the Christian brethren; † and a common interest bound all the communities of the Roman empire to the church of the great capital. In Rome was the *ecclesia apostolica* to which the largest portion of the West could appeal as to their common mother. In general, whatever transpired in this “apostolic church” could not fail to be well known to all; for Christians were continually pouring into it from all quarters of the world. So Irenæus, who wrote in Gaul, appeals,—as he does also occasionally to other apostolic churches,—in one passage particularly to the *ecclesia apostolica* in Rome, as the greatest, the oldest, (which must be doubted,) the universally known, the church founded by the two most illustrious apostles, where Christians congregate from the churches of the whole world, and could not fail to learn the doctrine taught by the apostles. ‡

\* Comp. the new inquiry into this matter in the 3rd edition of my *History of the Planting, &c.*, p. 516 et seq.

† Euseb. l. IV. c. 23.

‡ L. III. c. 3. According to the ancient Latin translation (the Greek original being unfortunately lost), “Ad hanc ecclesiam, propter potiorem principalitatem, necesse est omnem convenire ecclesiam, hoc est, eos qui sunt undique fideles, in qua semper ab his, qui sunt undique, conservata est ea, quæ est ab apostolis traditio.” If we take the word *convenire* in the intellectual sense,—all churches must *agree* with the Roman church as the one having preëminence over the rest,—we have a meaning which is by no means natural, and least of all one which coincides with the circle of ideas elsewhere exhibited in Irenæus. What could be the meaning of saying the churches of the whole world have preserved in the Roman church the apostolic tradition? It could only be understood in some such way as this: that the Roman church was the centre and representative of all the Christian churches; as if,—what was said in later times,—the whole church was contained *virtualiter* in the Roman; an idea of which not the least trace is to be found in Irenæus, and a mode of expression entirely foreign to this whole period. If the passage



Moreover, by means of letters, and Christian brethren who were travelling, a correspondence was maintained between the most distant churches in the Roman empire. When

is really to be understood in this way, it would be difficult to avoid the suspicion that it is one instance of that interpolation of which so many traces are to be observed in this writer. But although it is impossible, in the absence of the original Greek, to decide with perfect certainty as to the right interpretation of these words, yet there are other ways of explaining them, which agree more completely with Irenæus' mode of thinking as elsewhere exhibited, and with the context of the whole passage. In the first place, I must state that I cannot approve of the interpretation proposed by the Licenciate Thiersch in the *Studien und Kritiken*, J. 1842, 2tes Heft, S. 527, by which, we may admit, all difficulties would be removed. According to that exposition, the phrase "in qua," "ἐν ᾗ," should be referred not to the more remote subject, "hanc ecclesiam," but to that which stands nearer, "omnem ecclesiam," as the antecedent,—every church in which the doctrine has been preserved pure, as the author himself explains: "Dummodo ne in ea per hæreticos ipsos traditionis puritas inquinata sit, sive, Irenæi verbis utar, dummodo in ea a fidelibus cujusvis sint loci pure conservata sit tradita ab Apostolis veritas." But this exposition seems to me to be absolutely opposed by the intervening sentence, "hoc est eos," &c. If Irenæus intended any such determination of ecclesia, he would certainly have affixed it immediately to the word ecclesiam. And after all, it is most natural to refer the relative to the Roman church as the principal subject. But now it is very questionable what Greek word the term "convenire" corresponds to; whether to *συμβαίνειν*, as is supposed by Dr. Gieseler, and by Dr. Nitzsch, who agrees with him, in his letter to Delbrück, and by Licenciate Thiersch in the treatise above cited, or to *συνέρχασθαι*. If the latter, then by *coming* must be understood a coming to that place in person, and the passage would have to be explained thus: On account of the rank which this church maintains as the ecclesia urbis, all churches, that is, believers from all countries, must—the "must" lies in the nature of the case—come together there; and since now from the beginning Christians from all countries must come together there, it follows that the apostolic tradition has been preserved from generation to generation by the Christians from all countries of the world who are there united together. Every deviation from it would here fall immediately under the observation of all. As confirmatory of this interpretation, we might cite what Athenæus says of the city of Rome (*Deipnosoph.* l. 1, s. 36): "Οἰκουμένης δῆμον τὴν Ῥώμην, τὴν Ῥώμην πόλιν ἐπιτομὴν τῆς οἰκουμένης, ἐν ᾗ συνιδεῖν ἐστὶν οὕτως πάσας τὰς πόλεις ἰδρυμένας." So might one say, "Ἐν τῇ Ῥωμαίων ἐκκλησίᾳ πάσας ἐκκλησίας ἰδρυμένας." Yet I will not deny the difficulty attending the interpretation of the second sentence: to the alteration of conservata into observata, as proposed in the first edition, I can no longer agree. If, on the one hand, we consider *συμβαίνειν* to be the word which answers to "convenire," it would be the best way, with Gieseler, to suppose an error of translation—that the translator had by mistake rendered the

a Christian entered a strange city, his first inquiry was for the church; and here he was received as a brother, and supplied with whatever could contribute to his spiritual and to his bodily refreshment. But as deceivers, the evil disposed, and spies, and false teachers who sought only to gain adherents to their peculiar opinions, abused the confidence and charity of the Christians, it became necessary to adopt precautionary measures to prevent the injuries which the indiscriminate practice might give rise to. A regulation was therefore adopted, that only such travelling Christians as could produce a certificate from the bishop of the church from which they came should be received as brethren in the churches to which they were strangers. These church letters,—which were a kind of *tessaræ hospitales*, by which Christians from every quarter of the world were placed in fraternal union with each other,—received the name of *epistolæ* or *literæ formatae* (*γράμματα τετυπωμένα*); because, to guard against forgery, they were drawn up after a certain form (*forma*, *τύπος*);\* they were also named "*epistolæ communicatoriæ*" (*γράμματα κοινωνικά*), inasmuch as they indicated that the bearers were in the communion of the church, as well as that the bishops who sent and received such letters were united together in the bonds of church communion. By degrees the church letters (*epistolæ clericæ*) were divided into different classes, according to their different objects.

As a close bond of union was early formed between

Greek dative into "ab his." In this case the words would have to be understood thus: "in which church the apostolic tradition has *ever* been preserved *for* the Christians of all countries of the world." I cannot deny that, in the comparison of these words with those at the beginning of the same chapter, "*in omni ecclesia adest respicere omnibus*," an argument may be found in favour of the conjecture. But even according to this interpretation, the same general view of Rome as that contained in the passage from Athenæus would lie at the basis of the whole. I think it will be unnecessary for me to remark that in this investigation I am very far from being influenced by any Protestant interest. From the position of a scientific understanding of the historical development of Christianity not the slightest danger can accrue to the interests of Protestantism, which I profess, by recognising a high antiquity of the Roman Catholic element, both in general and in particular.

\* How very necessary it was to guard against the falsification of such church letters may be seen from a passage in Eusebius, l. IV. c. 23, and another in Cyprian ep. 3.



churches of the same province, so it was also a consequence of the catholic spirit of Christianity, that in all cases of emergency, such as disputes on matters of doctrine, of Christian morals, or church discipline, common deliberations should be frequently held by deputies from these churches. Such assemblies become familiar to us in the controversies about the time of celebrating Easter, and in the discussions on the Montanistic prophecies, towards the close of the second century. But as permanent and regular assemblies, called together at stated seasons, these provincial synods do not fall under our notice before the end of the second or the beginning of the third century. And even then it is only as a peculiar practice of a single district, where local causes may have introduced such an arrangement earlier than in other countries. This district was *Greece proper*, where, from the time of the Achæan league, the spirit of confederation had still maintained itself. As Christianity could attach itself to all national peculiarities, so far as they contained in them nothing immoral, and even enter into them, and in combination with them, to manifest itself under a peculiar form, it might easily happen that the *civil* spirit of federation which existed here should pass over to the *ecclesiastical*, and give to the latter, still earlier than in other countries, a form which was in fact well suited for the common deliberations of the Christians. And thus out of the representative assemblies of the civil communities,—the Amphictyonic councils,—sprang the provincial synods as representative assemblies of the ecclesiastical bodies. As the Christians, conscious that they were nothing and could do nothing without the Spirit from on High, were accustomed to preface every important business with prayer, so also in these assemblies they prepared themselves for their public deliberations by uniting in prayer to Him who had promised to enlighten and guide by his Spirit those who believe in Him, whenever they should cast themselves wholly on Him, and to be in the midst of all who were gathered together in his name.\*

It seems that this regular institution was at first opposed

\* See the passage of Tertullian, in a work written at the beginning of the third century (*de jejuniis*, c. 13): *Aguntur per Græcias illa certis in locis concilia, ex universis ecclesiis, per quæ et altiora quæque in commune tractantur, et ipsa representatio totius nominis Christiani magna veneratione celebratur.*

as an innovation, so that Tertullian felt himself called upon to stand forth as its advocate.\* Yet the prevailing spirit of the church decided in favour of the arrangement, and down to the middle of the third century the annual provincial synods appear to be universal,—if we may judge from the fact that we find them assembled at the same time in parts of the Church as widely apart as Northern Africa and Cappadocia.†

These provincial synods were, beyond a doubt, calculated to be eminently salutary in unfolding and purifying the life of Christianity and of the Church, and indeed they did prove so in many respects. By means of such general deliberations the views of individuals might mutually enlarge and correct each other; wants, abuses, and necessary reforms might, by their common suggestions, be more easily and more fully discussed, and the experience of each be made available to all. Moreover it certainly savoured neither of fanaticism nor hierarchical presumption, if the presidents and deputies of these assemblies, conscious that they were assembled in the name of Christ, confidently relied on the guidance of His Spirit, Whose organs alone they desired to be.

But this confidence, so right and so salutary in itself, took a false and mischievous direction when it ceased to be accompanied by a spirit of humility and self-renunciation, and by an ever-living consciousness of the condition to which Christ had attached that promise, viz. of their being assembled *in his name*. When, unmindful of this condition, the bishops believed they were entitled merely as bishops to reckon on the illumination of the Holy Spirit, so ungrounded an opinion became the source of all the self-deceptions of spiritual pride that dared to express itself in the customary words with which the decrees of such synods were made known, “under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit”—“*Spiritu Sancto suggerente.*”

The provincial synods, again, would operate as a check on the development of the Church, if, instead of providing for the interests of the communities according to the varying wants of each period, they should attempt to bind changeable

\* *Ista solennia, quibus tunc præsens patrociniatus est sermo.*

† Cyprian, ep. 40, and Firmilianus of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, in Cyprian, ep. 75: *Necessario apud nos fit, ut per singulos annos seniores et præpositi in unum conveniamus, ad disponenda ea, quæ curæ nostræ commissa sunt.*



things to unchangeable laws. Finally, it seems to me an evil that the people were excluded from all participation in these assemblies, and that at last the bishops came to have the sole power in them, and by the union with each other, which these synods facilitated, made themselves more powerful every day.

As the provincial synods were accustomed to communicate their decisions on all important matters of common interest to distant bishops, they thus served, at the same time, to place the more remote portions of the Church in living union with each other, and to preserve them in this connection.

*Union of the entire Church in one body, closely connected and interdependent in all its parts. Outward Unity of the Catholic Church, and its Mode of Representation.*

Thus from the obscure grain of mustard-seed, sown in the field of the world, sprung up a tree which towered above all the plants of the earth, and extended its branches in every direction—that great whole of the Catholic Church, which, closely united in all its scattered parts, was, in its origin, its course of development, and its constitution, distinguished from all barely human institutions. The consciousness of being a member of such a body, that, victorious over all opposition of earthly power, was destined to endure for ever, must have exercised a stronger and more lively influence on Gentiles, who, knowing none but political and earthly bonds of union, had no idea of a spiritual and moral tie which should bind men together as members of the same heavenly community. Still stronger and more elevating must this consciousness have become under persecution, when all the powers from without sought in vain to break asunder this connection. Justly therefore did the Christians attach importance even to this unity in its outward manifestation—to this intimate connection even outwardly of all their brethren—as serving to represent the unity of a higher life, and to exhibit the unity of the kingdom of God. In the outward communion of the church they experienced the blessed effects of the inward communion of the invisible kingdom of God. And to maintain this unity they entered into conflict both with the idealistic sects, which threatened to sever the

inward bond of religious communion—the bond of faith—by introducing into the Christian Church the old distinction between a religion for the educated and refined, and a popular belief (*πίστις* and *γνώσις*), and thereby, as Clement of Alexandria justly urged, dividing the Church into a multitude of Theosophical schools;\* and also with those who, blinded by self-will or passion, brought in divisions on mere outward matters, while in faith they agreed with the rest.

But a struggle which had its rise in a genuine interest for Christianity, and had for its aim the putting down of some one-sided subjective element that threatened to dissolve the wholesome unity of the Church, might easily mislead to another extreme—an undue estimation of externals—of the existing forms, with which this unity was at first closely connected. Since that outward unity was, beyond all doubt, not altogether extrinsecal, but the image and expression of the inward unity, and presented itself to the Christian consciousness and experience in this connection, it was only too likely for men in the zeal of controversy to be misled into confounding in thought things which the feelings and experience of every one had long fused together, and to consider them as inseparably connected. Thus the idea of the Church and its necessary unity was outwardly projected, and became objective. This outward Church became the primary one for the religious consciousness, and the only possible medium of communion with Christ. That which in all alike ought to have formed itself outwardly from within, was transferred to this communion thus brought about by means of a determinate outward organism of certain visible forms, and consequently the inner and the outward, the invisible and the visible, inseparably blended together. This association in the Christian consciousness we trace already in so early a writer as Irenæus. For he first of all defines the idea of the Church subsisting under this determinate form of constitution, and then puts down the communion of the Holy Spirit as something first derived from, and imparted by, the former: beginning with, “*Ubi ecclesia, ibi et Spiritus Dei*,” he afterwards adds, “*et ubi Spiritus Dei, illic ecclesia*.”† An entirely

\* For the words of Clemens see St. I. VII. p. 755: *Αὐχοῦσι προίστασθαι διατριβῆς μᾶλλον ἢ ἐκκλησίας.*

† L. III. c. 24, s. 1.



different apprehension of the idea of the Church and its necessary unity would have been presented by simply reversing the order of these propositions. "It is only at the breast of the Church," as Irenæus says, "that man can be nursed to life. He cannot partake of the Holy Spirit who takes not refuge in the Church. He who separates himself from this Church renounces the fellowship of the Holy Spirit." Such are the propositions which are based in that association of ideas. It is true Irenæus had in his mind such opponents only of the Church as, by unchristian doctrine and temper, or some selfish interest, had deprived *themselves* of the fellowship of the divine life.\* Not without good and sufficient reason was it that he complained of those "who, from frivolous causes, divided, and, so far as in them lay, annihilated, the great and glorious body of Christ."† Of such doubtless he could say with great truth that they could in no case occasion as much good, through the divisions they excited, as they had done evil. But the position thus held by Irenæus might easily lead to the imputing a bad temper and purpose to *all* who, from any motive soever, excited a reaction against the dominant system, or produced a movement in the Church which might lead to divisions. Now the characteristic principle of the New Testament, which distinguishes it from the Old, is the outward development of the kingdom of God from within man's spirit. Consequently in this giving objectiveness to the kingdom of God—in this notion that the outward Church is an indispensable medium—we may recognise the result of that same confusion of the Old and the New Testament positions which we traced before in the notions of the priesthood and of the clergy. Indeed both are necessarily connected; for the existence and propagation of the Church must, in fact, depend on the priesthood and its connection with Christ, kept up by the medium of the former. And then, besides the priesthood, came also the episcopal system, as the outward medium and foundation of the outward unity of the Church—a new step in the progress of Theocracy externally projected,

\* Semetipsos fraudant a vita per sententiam malam et operationem pessimam.

† L. IV. c. 33, s. 7: Διὰ μικρὰς καὶ τυχεύουσας αἰτίας τὸ μέγα καὶ ὑπερῶν σώμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ τέμνοντες καὶ διαρρέοντες, καὶ ὅσον τὸ ἐκ' αὐτοῖς ἀνακρίνοντες.

whose deep-reaching consequences must ever go on unfolding themselves more widely.

As in perfecting the episcopal system, so also in this process of giving an objective value to the outward Church by confounding the principles of the Old and the New Testament, Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, played an important part. On this point his treatise '*De Unitate Ecclesiæ*,' written after the middle of the third century, amidst the divisions with which he had to contend, is deserving of marked consideration. This book contains a remarkable mixture of the true and the false, arising from such an objective view of the Church; and in much that he says, when stripped of that outward notion, and understood after a more inward sense, we shall recognise the pure expression of the Christian consciousness, especially when we apply to the propositions which he lays down the distinction of the visible and the invisible Church. We shall then find in this work much that is true, made most justly to bear upon a self-seeking, insulating tendency, that breaks loose from all connection with the fellowship of divine life, whose foundation is Christ. What he says of the outward relation to some determinate visible form of manifestation of the Church requires only to be applied to the inner relation to the communion of saints, subsisting in union with Christ its head, whence the divine life flows forth to the whole body of the members—which communion of saints is, we must maintain, not necessarily confined to any determinate form of constitution. "Try to pluck away his beams from the sun," says Cyprian, "the unity of the light cannot be so divided. Break away the twig from the tree, it cannot produce fruit. Cut off the stream from its fountain, it becomes dry. Just so the Church, permeated by the light of the Lord, sends its rays through the whole world. Yet the light which is thus diffused in all directions is *one*. In the lap of that Church we were born; we are nourished by its milk, and quickened by its spirit. Whatever breaks itself off from the original stock, when thus apart by itself, cannot breathe and live." But all this, which in itself is quite true, Cyprian referred exclusively to the existing Church, connected—by means of the bishops, its pillars, as the successors of the apostles and inheritors of their spiritual power—with these apostles, and through them with Christ. His chain



of ideas is this: Christ communicated to the apostles, the apostles to the bishops by ordination,\* the power of the Holy Ghost; by the succession of bishops the power of the Holy Ghost, from whom alone all religious acts receive their efficacy, is, through the channel of this outward transmission, continually handed down to all times. Thus in this organization of the Church is preserved, and ever unfolds itself with a living progression, that divine life, which, flowing from the fountain-head through this channel, is distributed to all the parts, still united to the organic whole; and whoever breaks off his external connection with this outward organization, puts himself thereby out of communion with that divine life and out of the way to salvation. No one by himself alone, through belief in the Saviour, has any share in the divine life that flows from him; no one by this belief alone can secure to himself all the blessings of God's kingdom; all these, on the contrary, must be derived through these organs and by union with them—the union with the Catholic Church, which, through the succession of bishops, derives itself from Christ.

This outward view of the Church, however, when it had progressed so far, called forth a reaction, which, resting on the words of Christ Himself, strove to establish a more spiritual understanding of its idea. A class of persons, perhaps laymen,† opposed themselves to Cyprian, and appealed to the promise of Christ, that “where two or three were gathered together in His name, there He would be in the midst of them” (Matth. xviii. 20). Every association of true believers, they argued, was a church. But Cyprian, on the other hand, styled such as urged this objection corruptors of the gospel. He accused them of rending these words from the context, and thereby giving a false turn to them. He maintained that Christ had made harmony among believers, the union of hearts in love, the condition of the fulfilment of this promise. He then proceeded to argue:‡ “But how is it possible for that

\* See on its original form and significancy, my *History of the Planting*, &c., vol. i. p. 213.

† Cyprian describes them thus: *Nec se quidam vana interpretatione decipiant, quod dixerit Dominus: Ubique fuerint duo aut tres collecti in nomine meo, ego cum iis sum. Corruptores evangelii atque interpretes falsi.* See next note.

‡ *Extrema ponunt et superiora prætereunt, partis memores et partem subdole comprimantes. Ut ipsi ab ecclesia scissi sunt, ita capituli unius*

person to agree with any individual, who does not agree with the body of the Church itself and the whole brotherhood? How can two or three be gathered together in the name of Christ, who are separated from Christ and his gospel?" He looks in vain for the fulfilment of the condition to which this promise was attached, in men who, from selfishness or waywardness, had separated from the Church; for *they* were the authors of the schism—the Church had not separated from them.\* But who is that infallible judge of men's inward disposition who shall be able, from their outward conduct towards the Church, not always free from blemish, to infer with certainty that such a temper exists, amidst the struggle of parties, where ignorance and misapprehension are quite possible, and right and wrong *may be* on both sides?

As the outward projection and objectivity of the idea of the church gave rise to the assumption of its necessary outward unity, so this led to the thought that there should be some fixed point for the outward representation of this outward unity. This notion was at first very vague and undefined, but it was, nevertheless, the germ from which sprang the papal monarchy of the middle ages.

Now it was, without doubt, no accidental circumstance that the Apostle Peter, rather than any other of the apostles, became the representative of this unity for the religious consciousness of the Western church. For on him especially, in virtue of his natural character, ennobled by the Holy Spirit, the charisma of church government had been bestowed. This Christ adopted for the development of the first community, when He named him the Man of Rock, and made him the man of rock on which He would build his church. But this He said, not to that Peter with whom the human passed for more than the divine—not to that Peter whom rather He called a Satan, but to the one who had uttered the mighty witness to Him as the Son of God, and in so far as he had uttered this—that one to whom He could say, "Blessed art

sententiam scindunt—. Unanimitatem prius posuit, concordiam pacis ante præmisit, ut conveniat nobis, fideliter et firmiter docuit. Quomodo autem potest ei cum aliquo convenire, cui cum corpore ipsius ecclesiæ non convenit? Quomodo possunt duo aut tres in nomine Christi colligi, quos constat a Christo et ab ejus evangelio separari?

\* Non enim nos ab illis, se illi a nobis recesserunt.



thou, for flesh and blood have not revealed this unto thee, but my Father in heaven." This peculiar charisma gained for this apostle the position he held in speaking and acting in the name of the first church.\* Yet with all this, preëminence and authority over the rest of the apostles was not conceded to him. Indeed, the question of precedence of rank was never once to be raised among them. Every assumption of that kind was severely rebuked by Him who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. (Luke xxii. 24.) All rather were to vie in serving one another. Three were the apostles whom, by reason of their personal character, Christ distinguished above the rest. Peter was only *one of these*. Each of them had his own particular charisma and his peculiar position dependent thereon. As Peter was the man of Rock, working outwardly, so John possessed that charisma by virtue of which he leaned on the Lord's bosom, and penetrated most deeply both into his being and into the meaning of his discourses. As his peculiar charisma and position caused Peter to stand forth from the very first at the founding of the church, so the charisma and position of St. John caused him to retire from view, and to take no prominent part until a later period, when it became necessary to reconcile the oppositions that had arisen, to restore peace among the conflicting elements, and to tranquillise and settle the agitated communities. The great apostle to the Gentiles maintained, in the most decided manner, his apostolical independence against that Jewish principle which, estimating everything by an outward and objective standard, subsequently, under another form, was mixed up with the development of the church; and St. Paul could say of himself that grace had effected more by him than by all the others.

From these remarks, then, it must be clear that the idea of the primacy of St. Peter rested on nothing but a misunderstanding both of the position which had been assigned him in the progressive movement of the church, as also of the particular titles which were given to him. But still it was not without reason that this tendency attached itself to his name.

In his work on the unity of the church Cyprian justly

\* See my History of the Planting, &c., Vol. II. p. 505 et seq.

observes that all the apostles had received from Christ the same dignity and the same power with Peter. But still he is of opinion that in one passage Christ bestows this power on Peter in particular—says of him specially that on him He will build His church—gives it in charge to him in particular to feed His sheep; and that this was done for the purpose of showing how the whole development of the church and the priesthood was to radiate from one point, in order to manifest most clearly the unity of the church, the unity of the episcopal power. The Apostle Peter appears to him to be as the representative of the *one* church, abiding in the unity she derived from the divine appointment, and of the one episcopal power, which, though distributed among many organs, yet in its origin and essence is and ever remains but one. Whoever, therefore, forsakes the outward fellowship with the one visible catholic church, tears himself away from the representation of the unity of the church connected by divine appointment with the person of the Apostle Peter. How is it possible for any one to suppose he continues still to be a member of the church of Christ when he forsakes the cathedra Petri on which the church was founded? \*

But even allowing that the Apostle Peter might be considered as the representative of the unity of the church, still it by no means follows that such a centre of representation must be continued in the church through every age. Still less does it follow that this central representation must reside permanently in the Roman church. For although we admit as true the tradition that the Apostle Peter visited the church at Rome, yet it is most certain that he was not the founder of this church, and never was at its head as bishop. With as much propriety can this church be called the cathedra Pauli as the cathedra Petri. Irenæus and Tertullian are indeed of opinion that Peter and Paul were its founders, that they gave it a bishop, and honoured it by their martyrdom. But that

\* Some trace of *this* mode of explaining the above passages relating to the Apostle Peter may be found even in Tertullian. *Præscript. hæret.* c. 22: "Latuit aliquid Petrum ædificandæ ecclesiæ Petrum dictum, claves regni cœlorum consecutum et solvendi et alligandi in cœlis et in terris potestatem?" This language shows that he was not a Montanist when he wrote this book; as is evident by comparing it with what he wrote when a Montanist in his book *de Pudicitia*, of which we shall speak hereafter.



the Roman church, as the cathedra Petri, held a preëminence over all other apostolic churches (sedes Apostolicæ) is a matter of which they are wholly ignorant. Yet as the idea of an outward unity of the church could suggest the notion of an outward representative of that unity, so the recognition of such an historical representation might easily pass out of the ideal into the real world, and consequently the exhibition of this unity at a determinate point came to be considered not barely as a thing that *once existed*, but as necessary for the existence of the church in all times. And as it was not by mere chance that the apostle had been made the representative of the church guidance, so too was it not by mere chance that men, when once disposed to look for an outward representation of ecclesiastical unity for all times, transferred this dignity precisely to the church of the great city which was called to rule in the world. As most of the western communities were wont to regard the Roman church as their mother, their *ecclesia apostolica*, to whose authority they especially appealed; as they were accustomed to call St. Peter the founder of the Roman church, and to refer to him the traditions of the Roman church; and as Rome was then the seat of the empire of the world; it so came to pass that men began to look upon the Roman church as the cathedra Petri, and to apply to this cathedra Petri whatever had been said of the Apostle Peter as representative of the unity of the church. In the objective embodying of the conception of the church, from which this form of the outward presentation of its unity gradually arose, the way was already prepared for the conversion of the political supremacy of the "city" into this spiritual form—a transference, moreover, which contained the germ of the secularisation of Christ's kingdom.

In Cyprian we find this transference already complete. In proof of our assertion we will adduce not only *the* passage in his book *De Unitate Ecclesiæ*, where the reading is disputed,\*

\* Though, in the passage, "*Qui ecclesiæ renititur et resistit, [qui cathedram Petri, super quem fundata est ecclesia, deserit,] in ecclesia se esse confidit?*" the suspected clause, here included in brackets, were genuine, yet it would not follow that in this *particular instance* Cyprian had in his mind the cathedra Petri subsisting at his time in the *Roman* church; but the phrases, "*ecclesiæ reniti,*" and "*cathedram Petri deserere,*" seem rather, according to the context, to be absolutely

but an uncontroverted passage, ep. 55, ad Cornel., where he styles the Roman church the “*Petri cathedra, ecclesia principalis, unde unitas sacerdotalis exorta est.*”

Without doubt this idea was still very obscure and vague; but the false principle once established, the more vague its notion the more room would there be for introducing new meanings and for extracting new consequences. In the minds of the Roman bishops this idea seems early to have obtained a more fixed and definite shape; and the Roman love of rule seems early to have insinuated itself here into ecclesiastical affairs, and came forward in a spiritual garb.

Very early indeed do we observe in the Roman bishops traces of the assumption that to them, as successors of St. Peter, belonged a paramount authority in ecclesiastical disputes; that the *cathedra Petri*, as the source of the apostolic tradition, must take precedence of all other *ecclesiæ apostolicæ*. Such an assumption was put forward by the Roman bishop Victor, when, about A.D. 190, he excommunicated the churches of Asia Minor on account of some trifling dispute relating to a mere external matter.\* In the Montanistic writings of Tertullian we find indications that the Roman bishops already issued peremptory edicts on ecclesiastical matters, endeavoured to make themselves considered as the *bishops of bishops*—*episcopos episcoporum* † —and were in the habit of appealing to the authority of their “*antecessores.*” ‡

After the middle of the third century the Roman bishop Stephen allowed himself to be carried away by the same spirit of hierarchical arrogance as his predecessor Victor. In a dis-

equivalent, so that his meaning would be,—he who breaks his connection with the one only church, does by that very act attack the representation of the church unity which had been attached by Christ himself to the person of the Apostle Peter. The whole apostolic and episcopal fulness of authority as one, although manifesting itself through different organs, appears to him to be represented in the spiritual power transferred to the Apostle Peter. The entire *episcopatus*, or the *cathedra* of all the bishops conceived as one = the *cathedra Petri*, therefore to renounce obedience to the bishops is the same as to attack the *cathedra Petri*.

\* The dispute about the time of celebrating Easter, of which mention will be made hereafter.

† Tertullian, de pudicitia, c. 1: *Audio, edictum esse propositum et quidem peremptorium: pontifex scilicet maximus, quod est episcopus episcoporum, edicit.*

‡ Tertullian, de virg. velandis.



pute by no means important \* it was his wish also to obtrude the tradition of the Roman church on all other churches as an invariable and decisive law ; and he excommunicated the churches of Asia Minor and of North Africa, which refused to acknowledge such a rule.†

But it was far from being the case that these assumptions of the Roman bishops were acknowledged even through the whole Western Church—to say nothing here of the opposition they had to encounter from the freer tendencies of the Greek Church. In the first-named dispute, the churches of Asia Minor, without suffering themselves for a moment to be led away by the arrogant language of Victor, maintained their own principles, and set against the tradition of the Roman church the tradition of their own *sedes apostolicæ*. Irenæus, bishop of Lyons,‡ in a letter to the Roman bishop Victor, severely rebuked his unchristian arrogance, although agreeing with him on the point disputed. He disapproved of Victor's attempt to impose *one* form of church observances on all the churches : and declared that nothing was required but agreement in faith and in love ; and that this, instead of being disturbed by outward differences, would shine forth more clearly through them. He recognised the right of every church in such matters to follow freely and independently *its own* ancient usage. To the authority of tradition in any single church by itself he objected the fact that tradition often originates in, and is propagated by, simplicity and ignorance.§ Although Cyprian, as we have before remarked, looked upon the Roman church as really the *cathedra Petri*, and as the representative of the outward unity of the church, yet he was far from allowing for these reasons any right in that church to decide all matters controverted in the whole church. On the contrary, he firmly and vigorously maintained the independence of individual bishops in administering the affairs of their churches after their own principles ;

\* The dispute about the validity of baptism administered by heretics, also to be noticed elsewhere.

† *Nihil innovetur nisi quod traditum est*—he declared,—*se per successionem cathedram Petri habere*. Cyprian, ep. 74 et 75.

‡ Euseb. l. V. c. 24.

§ *Τῶν παρὰ τὸ ἀκριβὲς ὡς εἰκὸς κρατούντων τὴν καὶ ὑπὸ πλὴν καὶ ἰδιωτισμὸν συνήθειαν εἰς τὸ μετέπειτα πεποιηκότων.*

and in spite of the opposition of the Roman church he carried out what he held to be right. At the beginning of the second of the controversies already alluded to he communicated to Stephen, the Roman bishop, the principles of the North African church, which he well knew did not accord with the Roman usages, and in the name of a synod addressed him as one colleague, conscious of an equality of dignity and of rights, addresses another. "In virtue of our common dignity," says he, "and in sincere love, we have communicated these things to you, dearest brother; for we hope that whatever is agreeable to piety and truth will also, in the measure of your true faith and piety, be pleasing to *you*. We are well aware, indeed, that many are reluctant to lay aside what they have once taken up, and slow to change the principles they have adopted, but, without breaking the bond of unity and peace with colleagues, retain many peculiarities which have become customary among them. In matters of this sort, we put no restraint, we impose no law, on any man; since, in the management of the affairs of his own church, every bishop has the use of his free will, having hereafter to render an account of his administration to the Lord."\*

Even after the violent denunciations which followed from the Roman bishop, Cyprian maintained the same principle before a council of more than eighty of the bishops of North Africa, whom he invited severally to deliver their own views with freedom; "for no one," said he, "should make himself a bishop of bishops." When Stephen appealed to the authority of the ancient Roman tradition, and spoke against innovations, Cyprian replied † that it was rather Stephen himself who made the innovations, and fell away from the unity of the church. "Whence then," he says, "comes that tradition? Is it collected from the words of our Lord and from the authority of the gospels, or from the teaching and epistles of the apostles? Custom, which has crept in among some, ought not to hinder the truth from prevailing and triumphing; for custom without truth is but antiquity of error.‡ He beautifully

\* Qua in re nec nos vim cuiquam facimus aut legem damus, quando habeat in ecclesiæ administratione voluntatis suæ arbitrium liberum unusquisque præpositus, rationem actus sui Domino redditurus.

† Ep. 74, ad Pompej.

‡ Nec consuetudo, quæ apud quosdam obreperat, impedire debet



remarks, that it is no more beneath the dignity of a Roman bishop than of any other man to suffer himself to be corrected when he is in the wrong; "for the bishop ought not only to *teach*, but to *learn*; for he surely *teaches* best who is daily learning something new and goes on improving the old." Firmilian also, bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, in declaring his agreement with Cyprian, expressed himself strongly against the unchristian behaviour of Stephen, in forbidding the Roman church to receive the deputies of the North African church into their houses. He blamed him as one who, while he boasted of being the successor of the Apostle St. Peter, on whom was built the unity of the church, did nevertheless by his uncharitable and arrogant proceedings rend that unity. Besides doctrinal arguments, he opposes to the alleged tradition of the Roman church the tradition of other ancient churches; and in proof of the Romans not observing in all points the original tradition, and consequently appealing in vain to the authority of the apostles, he adduces the fact that in many matters they departed from the customs of the church at Jerusalem, and of the ancient apostolical churches.\* And yet, he observes, notwithstanding these differences, no one had ever thought of accusing them with disturbing the unity and peace of the catholic church.†

Cyprian had shown, on an earlier and very different question, how far he was from recognising in the Roman bishop a supreme jurisdiction over the church, or from countenancing them in the exercise of it. Two Spanish bishops, Basilides and Martialis, had been deposed by a synod, as being *libellatici*, and otherwise offenders; and it is said they themselves acknowledged the justice of the sentence. In the place of Basilides, moreover, a successor had been chosen by the provincial bishops, with the concurrence of the church over which he had presided. The deposed bishops however had recourse to Stephen bishop of Rome; and the latter, assuming a supreme judicial authority, reversed the sentence of the ecclesiastical court in Spain, and restored them both to their office; whether it was that he found good reasons for such a step in

quominus veritas prævaleat et vincat; nam consuetudo sine veritate vetustas erroris est.

\* Ep. 75.

† Eos autem, qui Romæ sunt, non ea in omnibus observare, quæ sunt ab origine tradita, et frustra apostolorum auctoritatem prætere.

what they alleged in their justification, or that there was already a strong inclination in the Roman church to favour those that appealed to its jurisdiction. A contest now arose in Spain on the question whether the first or the second sentence was to be respected, and the churches of North Africa were applied to for their advice. The North African synod at Carthage, with Cyprian, who answered in their name, did not hesitate to pronounce the sentence of the Roman bishop invalid, and strongly charged the Spanish churches not to suffer the two unworthy bishops to continue in office. Into the question, whether the Roman bishop possessed any such supreme appellate jurisdiction, Cyprian did not enter; but without further discussion he declared the unjust sentence, resting as it did on insufficient grounds, to be void. "The regular ordination," he observed \* (meaning of the successor to the deposed bishop Basilides), "cannot be rendered null, because Basilides, after the discovery and confession of his offences, went to Rome and deceived our colleague Stephen, who, being at a distance, could not be acquainted with the real circumstances of the case; so that he who had been deposed by a just sentence would, by his cunning contrivance, be reinstated in his office." Perhaps the mortification which the hierarchical ambition of Stephen experienced on this occasion—although in other respects Cyprian speaks of him with great moderation—had much to do in influencing the obstinate stand which he made in the later controversy of which we have before spoken.

*Church Discipline. Exclusion from the Fellowship of the Visible Church. Re-admission to the same.*

As the founder of the church had foretold, the process of its development could be none other than one continually renewed process of refining. The idea of a perfectly pure and holy church was not realizable in the earthly course of its history; for the life communicated by Christ to humanity can only be propagated in a never-ceasing conflict with the power of sin, which from without resists the current of that life, and is ever threatening to enter into and to disturb it. Even

\* Ep. 30.



the church which most truly answers to the idea thereof—the church of the regenerate and sanctified—is ever inwardly affected by the reaction of this principle of sin never wholly overcome; and consequently it is in continual need of cleansing. But this church, though in its essence invisible, is yet represented in a visible form; and to this its outward manifestation various elements become attached, which in no respect partake of that inner essence;—and there are no sure and certain marks whereby these heterogeneous components may be distinguished and separated. Manifold are the gradations through which it is possible to pass from the true church to its antagonist the world, which is ever striving to draw her into itself and to mould her by its own spirit; which however can never be fully accomplished unless she enter herself into such a union. Accordingly the perfect sifting of the chaff from the wheat, which can never be completed by any human judgment, and which would prematurely sever the threads of historical development ordained and guided by divine wisdom, and would hinder the church in her appointed work of reforming the world, must be left to a higher tribunal, and can only take place when the threads of history shall have run out.

However, the church, when left wholly to herself, and independent as yet of the state, might effect, if not a perfect, yet a *certain* separation. She might openly exclude from herself such foreign elements as showed themselves to be such by marks *not to be mistaken*, just as, long before, the Jewish synagogues had exercised a similar discipline over their respective members. The early churches were justified in seeking in this way to guard against the infection of pagan immorality, and thereby practically to bear witness that the mere profession of the faith made no man a Christian; that whoever by his daily life contradicted the laws of Christianity was not to be regarded as a Christian brother.

Accordingly the Apostle Paul declared the Christian churches not only justified, but even bound to eject all unworthy members from their communion (1 Cor. v.). With all the heathen the Christians might eat and hold every kind of intercourse; but the society of apostate brethren they were absolutely to shun, in order to show them practically that they had forfeited all claim to the title of Christian brethren.

Tertullian therefore might well say to the pagans, "Those who are no Christians are wrongfully called so; such in truth take no part in our religious assemblies; they do not receive the communion with us; they have by their sins become yours again, for we do not hold intercourse even with those whom your cruelty has forced to denial of the faith. And yet in truth we should more readily tolerate amongst us those who through compulsion than those who voluntarily have deserted the principles of our religion. Moreover it is without cause that you call those Christians who are not acknowledged as such by those Christians who refuse at any hazard to deny themselves.\*

\* *But the church was designed also to be a teacher of her children.* She must never give up the hope of recovering the fallen. By this very exclusion from the society of the brethren, those who had fallen would, it was hoped, if they still retained any better feelings, be brought to a sense of their guilt, and be awakened to a fruitful repentance. If in their subsequent life they gave any sign of this, they were to be taken under the spiritual care of the church, and at length, after they had given sufficient proof of the sincerity of their repentance, were once more to be admitted to the communion. Such was the direction of the Apostle Paul. Various regulations were in the course of time introduced with regard to the cases which should be visited with such excommunication from the church; to the mode of life which the excommunicated ought to lead; to the proofs of remorse and penitence which they must give; and to the length of time such excommunications were to last. All these points were determined according to the nature of the different offences and the moral character evinced by the several offenders. Out of those who stood in this relation to the church there was formed a particular class, designated by the name of *pœnitentes*. Tertullian requires "that the inward compunction of conscience should be manifested also by outward acts;† that they should express their sorrow by their whole dress, pray with fasting for the forgiveness of their sins, lay before the church a confession of their sins, beg of their Christian brethren to pray for them,

\* Ad nation. l. I. c. 5.

† Ut non sola conscientia præferatur, sed aliquo etiam actu administretur. De pœnitentia, c. 9.



and especially that they should humble themselves before the priests and the known friends of God."\* To those who suffered themselves to be kept back by shame from making confession before the church, he says,† "This may be grievous where one exposes himself to contempt and to mockery; where others exalt themselves at the expense of him who has fallen; but in the midst of brethren and fellow-servants, where the hope, fear, joy, pain, and suffering are shared in common, because one common spirit proceeds from one common Lord and Father, why should you there consider your own as different from yourself? Why, while your grief is to them as their own, do you fly from them as if they rejoiced over it? The body cannot rejoice in the suffering of any of its members. The whole body must share in the pain and contribute to the cure. Where two are together, there is the church; but the church is Christ. When, then, you embrace the knees of your brother, you embrace Christ,—you are a suppliant to Christ. And so, when they weep over you, Christ also suffers, Christ supplicates the Father. Easily is that obtained which the Son suppliantly asks of the Father." Origen writes,‡ "The Christians mourn over those who have been overcome by lust or any other notorious vice as if they were dead; and after a while, when they have given sufficient evidence of a change of heart, they restore them to the standing of catechumens, receiving them once more even as risen from the dead." Their penitence having been satisfactorily proved, absolution and restoration to the communion of the church were imparted to them, with the sign of blessing, the laying on of the hands of the bishop and clergy.

Salutary as these regulations might be in the then existing state of the church, as a means of Christian culture, yet they involved the great danger of the inner essence being confounded with the outward form, especially when the objective notion of the church had become a fundamental principle. Such, for example, must have been the case either when it was attempted to connect the expression of penitent feelings with certain uniform signs, and the opinion arose that in these there would always be contained the essence of true penitence itself; or, when no distinction was made betwixt absolution

\* L. c.  
VOL. I.

† L. c. c. 10.

‡ c. Cels. l. III. c. 51.

and the divine forgiveness of sins. The teachers of the church, indeed, did not fail to insist upon the inward sentiment as the principal point on which everything depended, and to guard against all substitution of the mere outward sign for the true penitence of the heart. "When the man condemns himself," says Tertullian,\* "God acquits him. So far, believe me, as thou sparest not thyself, God will spare thee." And thus also, in a letter written in the latter half of the third century, says Firmilian, bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia:—"With us the bishops and priests meet once a year to consult together for the recovery by repentance of our fallen brethren, not as though they received from us the forgiveness of sins, but that, by our means, they may be brought to a sense of their sins and driven to render a more perfect satisfaction to the Lord."† Cyprian explains himself thus:‡—"We do not pre-judge the Lord's judgment; therefore, if He find the sinner's repentance true and perfect, He will ratify our decision; but if any man shall have deceived us by a feigned repentance, then may God, who will not be mocked, and who searcheth the heart, decide what we have failed to see through, and may the Lord correct the sentence of his servants."

But still it cannot be denied that even here were felt consequences resulting from the *outward* embodying of the conception of the church and the Old Testament views of the priesthood. The passing sentence on such as had rendered themselves liable to the penance of the church was assigned exclusively to the priesthood; and the full power of exercising it was derived from the authority to bind and to loose given to the apostles. To submit to the judgment of the priest appeared an act of that humility which belongs to the essence of true penitence.§ And so the notion was formed that the penances of the church might be considered as satisfactions to be paid to God.|| Perhaps there were some who were opposed to such a view of the necessity of outward penance, and who endea-

\* De pœnitentia, c. 9.

† Cyprian, ep. 75.

‡ In his 52nd letter ad Antonian.

§ See the words, in a letter of the Confessors, in Cyprian (ep. 26.): Humilitas atque subjectio, alienum de se expectasse iudicium, alienam de suo sustinuisse sententiam.

|| Satisfactio, in Tertullian's book de Pœnitentia; a term derived from the civil law, which he had studied and practised in early life.



voured, on the other hand, to establish the principle that all depended on the government of the heart and of the affections towards God, not on external things.\* We say *perhaps*—for, from the way in which Tertullian, from his own peculiar position, combated what seem to have been such, we cannot decide with certainty in what sense that principle was understood. It is certainly possible that there may have been a class who made a *false* distinction between the Inner and the Outward in the religious life, and, under the pretext that all depended on the inner direction of the affections towards God alone, excused and allowed themselves in all the failings of the outward life.†

Connected with the remarks we have here made on penance and absolution must be our judgment also of a controversy which arose with regard to these matters. Had the notion of absolution been rightly understood as an announcement of the divine forgiveness of sin, dependent in every case on repentance and faith, instead of being made into a judicial act of the clergy, a mutual understanding might have been easily brought about in the dispute which we are now about to mention. We allude to the controversy between a milder and a more rigid party on the subject of church penance.

All were agreed in distinguishing those sins into which all Christians might fall through the sinfulness of their nature, and those which, being wholly inconsistent with the character of the regenerate, clearly indicated that the transgressor had again fallen under the bondage of sin,—between *peccata venalia* and *peccata mortalia*, or *ad mortem*. These terms they had derived from the first epistle of St. John. Among sins of the second class the sterner party reckoned, besides the denial of Christianity, deception, theft, incontinence, adultery, &c.‡ But the milder party, which gradually became the predominant one, maintained that the church was bound to receive

\* Sed ajunt quidam, satis Deum habere, si corde et animo suspiciatur, licet actu minus fiat. De pœnitentia, c. 5.

† “Itaque se salvo metu et fide peccare.” So writes Tertullian, who is only too prone to draw unfair inferences from the doctrines of his opponents.

‡ Homicidium, idololatria, fraus, negatio, blasphemia, mœchia, et fornicatio. Tertullian, de pudicitia, c. 19.

every fallen member, whatever might have been the sins into which he had fallen—to offer to all, on the condition of sincere repentance, the hope of forgiveness of sins. In the hour of death, at least, absolution and the communion must be withheld from none who manifested true repentance. The other party positively refused restoration to church communion to all such as had violated their baptismal vow by sins of the latter class. Such persons, they said, have once and for ever despised the forgiveness of sin obtained for them by Christ, and assured to them in baptism. The counsels of the divine grace with regard to such are nowhere revealed to us; the church, therefore, has no warrant for holding out to them the forgiveness of sin. Though the church may exhort them to repent, yet she can promise them nothing as to the issue, since the authority conferred upon her of binding and loosing applies not to their case: she must leave them to the judgment of God. The one party would not that any limits should be set to God's mercy to penitents; the other were jealous for the holiness of God, fearing lest a false confidence in the power of priestly absolution should encourage men to feel safe in their sins.

### *Church Divisions or Schisms.*

The schisms or *divisions* in the church, strictly so called, must be distinguished from those which are properly designated as *heresies*. The former were such divisions of the catholic church as, taking their rise from certain outward occasions, were connected with the constitution or the discipline of the church; while the latter were divisions which sprang out of differences and controversies on matters of doctrine. While, therefore, all that we shall have to say of the latter is intimately connected with the *genetic* development of doctrine, the exposition of the former cannot be separated from the history of the constitution and discipline of the church: each serves to illustrate the other. In a doctrinal point of view the history of *divisions* is important only so far as it serves to unfold the teaching on the subject of the *church*; but the development of *this* doctrine stands closely connected again with the history of the constitution of the church. It seems, therefore, in every view, most consistent to annex the history



of schisms in the church with the section which relates that of its constitution.

We have, in this period, to notice two remarkable schisms of the church, which are intimately connected with each other, as well in respect to the *time of their origin* as in respect to the *churches* and persons who took chief part in them. In both the monarchical system of episcopacy is seen coming forth victorious from the struggle with presbyterianism; in both catholicism is seen triumphant over *Separatism*; and both divisions conducing to the establishment of the unity of the church. We refer to the schism of *Felicissimus* and to that of *Novatian*; the first proceeding out of the church of proconsular Africa, the second out of the church of Rome.

In the history of the first of these schisms Cyprian of Carthage appears as the head of one party, and the principal actor in it. Indeed, its origin was immediately connected with the circumstance of his election to the episcopal dignity. A brief sketch, therefore, of Cyprian's life will greatly facilitate a clear understanding of the whole subject. Cyprian had remained a heathen until after the prime of life. By profession he was a rhetorician, if not an advocate,\* and in his writings a certain rhetorical cast of style testifies to this earlier occupation. Even as a heathen he had gained public esteem by the uprightness of his life.† The influence of the presbyter Cæcilius, whose name he afterwards adopted, and who at his death committed his wife and children to Cyprian's care, converted him to the Christian faith. Although, as a heathen, he had, in the common estimation, led a blameless life, yet he judged very differently of himself, as soon as he had learned to contemplate the requisitions of the divine law, and to view himself by the light of Christianity. A profound sense of sin, as a power from which, by his own strength, man cannot deliver himself, preceded, in his case also, the experience of that which grace alone is able to effect. It is

\* Jerome says (d. v. i. c. 67) that he was a rhetorician, and there is no good reason for doubting this account. There is no necessity of supposing that, in what he says (ep. I. ad Donatum) respecting the opposition between spiritual and worldly eloquence, (in judiciis, in concione, pro rostris,) he was thinking of his own calling, and therefore had before made use of his eloquence in such addresses.

† See the biographical sketch of his life, composed by his disciple, the Deacon Pontius.

this that Cyprian himself expresses in a letter addressed to his friend Donatus, which was probably written soon after his baptism. The more ardently, therefore, was he now inspired with a glowing enthusiasm to attain to that idea of the divine life which Christianity had lighted up within his soul. Interpreting the words of our Lord, "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell that thou hast and give it to the poor," in conformity with the prevailing views of that period, more after the letter than the spirit, he sold the two landed estates of which he was possessed in order to fulfil this requisition,\* and distributed the proceeds among the poor. The devout zeal which so brightly shone forth in him even while a neophyte, gained for him, in a great measure, the love and esteem of the community. He became the man of the people, and the congregations employed the influence which at that time they still possessed in his behalf. Soon after his baptism he was, in 247, contrary to the letter of the law, raised by their votes to the dignity of the priesthood, and as early as the next year placed at the head of the church as bishop. The people surrounded his house in order to compel him to accept the episcopal dignity. But this very circumstance, that he had been raised to this high station by the enthusiastic love of the church, contributed from the first to the formation of a party against him, at the head of which were five priests.† Of these some perhaps had themselves claims to the episcopal office, and consequently regarded with jealous eyes the neophyte who had been promoted over the heads of those who had grown gray in the service of the church. They might also be influenced by other motives now unknown. Cyprian was well aware of the difficulties of the position he was about to assume. When he shrank from accepting the chief pastoral office, its whole weight and responsibility stood clearly before him—however attractive, on the other hand, it must have appeared to a man of his

\* His garden was probably by the affection of his flock soon restored to him, as we may gather from the language of Pontius: Hortos, quos inter initia fidei suæ venditos, et Dei indulgentia restitutos.

† We see this from the words of Pontius, in speaking of Cyprian's election: Quidam illi resisterunt, etiam ut vinceret; with which compare ep. 40, respecting the intrigues of the five presbyters: Conjuratiōis suæ memores et antiqua illa contra episcopatum meum imo contra suffragium vestrum et Dei judicium venena retinentes, instaurant veterem contra nos impugnationem suam.



peculiar bent and talent for government to be placed at the head of the church. We here discover the first ground and germ of the ensuing controversies. The five presbyters, with their followers, proceeded to contest the episcopal authority of Cyprian ; and as the presbyters were still mindful of their ancient rights, and still strove to maintain their former influence in the government of the church, there could be no want of disputes between a bishop and his antagonists in the presbyterial college, especially one who, like Cyprian, was so resolutely active in the consciousness of that supreme spiritual power which he believed himself to possess by divine right.

When men are contending for their rights—even those in whom, though the old nature is not altogether destroyed, the divine life has really begun—it often happens that, instead of vying with each other in the discharge of their duties in the spirit of love and self-denial, passion and self-will make both sides to look upon wrong as right. So was it in the present case. We are not, however, sufficiently well informed of all the circumstances of the case to be able clearly to separate the right from wrong on either side. For we have nothing to judge from but the statements of one party—statements which occasionally are stamped only too plainly with the impress of passionate warmth.

An unprejudiced consideration cannot fail to see in Cyprian a man animated with true love to the Redeemer and to His church. It is undeniable that his sentiments towards his flock were those of a faithful pastor ; that he had their true interests honestly at heart ; and that it was his wish to exercise his episcopal functions for the maintenance of order and discipline : but it is also certain that he was not sufficiently on his guard against that radical evil of human nature, which so easily fastens on what is best in man, perverting and even destroying his best qualities,—(an evil which is most dangerous in those especially who are endowed with the greatest gifts and powers for the Lord's service—most dangerous where it exhibits itself under the spiritual garb,)—in short, that he was not watchful enough against the emotions and suggestions of self-will and pride. The very point he was contending for, the supremacy of the episcopate, certainly proved the rock whereon at times his spiritual life made shipwreck. In the bishop, "*appointed by God himself and acting in the name of Christ,*" he forgot the *man*, still living in the flesh,

and *exposed*, like all other men, to the temptations of sin. In the *bishop*, over whom no layman might set up himself to judge—the bishop called to rule and gifted with an inviolable authority from God—he forgot the disciple of Christ, of Him Who was meek and lowly of spirit, and Who, for the good of His *brethren*, took upon Him the *form of a servant*. Had he always remained true to the spirit of discipleship to Christ, he might have gained the victory over his adversaries with far more ease to himself and safety to the church than by all his stir about the inalienable rights of the episcopate, and his appeals to the dignity of the bishop's office with which God had invested him.

The five presbyters of the opposite party, or at least some of them, seem to have been at the head of separate churches in Carthage or its neighbourhood; and they now ventured, in defiance of the bishop whom they hated, to take several independent proceedings in the management of their daughter and subordinate churches; or, at any rate, such measures as Cyprian, from the principles which he maintained with regard to the episcopal system, might well consider as infringements of the bishop's rights. One of them, Novatus by name, president of a community situated upon a hill in or near by Carthage, was, so far as we can judge,\* a man of restless and

\* The charges which Cyprian brings against him, (ep. 49,) if well founded, do, indeed, place him in the most unfavourable light; but these charges wear every appearance of being dictated by blind passion, of trusting in deceptive reports without due investigation, and of indulging a most unwarrantable liberty in drawing conclusions. A common method in controversies,—to impute the worst motives to an opponent, and suppose them just as true as if one could read into his heart, yet without offering the least evidence to justify the supposition. Novatus, it was said, was on the point of being arraigned before an ecclesiastical court, his own conscience declaring him guilty, when, happily for him, the Decian persecution broke out, and interrupted the proceedings which had been commenced against him. And now, with a view of evading the sentence which awaited him as soon as the persecution should cease, he excited those agitations of which we shall speak hereafter, and separated himself from the ruling church. How cleverly put together, yet how improbable, is all this! Cyprian himself, during the Decian persecution, recognised Novatus as a lawful presbyter (see ep. 5). Now for the first time does he know of this man such wicked things as, if they were true, would condemn the bishop who had suffered a person of such a character to retain the office of priest. Cyprian does indeed, bring forward facts, but what vouchers does he adduce for the



enterprising mind, who, with a fierce spirit of ecclesiastical freedom, spurned the yoke of episcopal monarchy.\* Without authority from the bishop, he proceeded to ordain as deacon of his own church one of his followers, Felicissimus, a man well calculated to become an enterprising partizan, and who doubtless personally possessed great influence in the congregation.† Cyprian declares this act an encroachment on his episcopal rights; but it may have been the opinion of Novatus, on the principles of his presbyterian system, that as a presbyter and presiding officer of the church he was warranted in what he had done. The right and the wrong in the transaction was a

truth of those facts? How would it have been possible for this man, in such accusations could be justly brought against him, to play the part he did? What is there that, amidst party strifes of this kind, idle tattle will not gradually set a going? The opponents of Cyprian too, as we may infer from his letter to Pupianus, of which we shall speak hereafter, had said many hard things against him.

\* So far there may have been truth in Cyprian's statement when he calls him (ep. 49) *Fax et ignis ad conflanda seditionis incendia*.

In order to a right understanding of Novatus' conduct in these disputes, it is important to have the question settled, whether he was one of the five presbyters who opposed Cyprian from the beginning. Mosheim has urged several objections against this supposition, the most weighty of which we shall presently notice. The question, we must admit, is not one which can be decided with absolute certainty. But yet the whole connection of the history seems to be in favour of the affirmative. In Cyprian's fifth letter, already quoted, the names of four presbyters are given as having brought him a petition. One of these, Fortunatus, belonged, according to Cyprian's own statement, ep. 55, to the five presbyters. Now, as the name of Novatus occurs here along with that of Fortunatus, it is highly probable that all the four presbyters, who seem in this case to have formed one party, were in fact no other than the old opposition party,—the five presbyters or presbyterium Felicissimi. And in the repulsive answer which Cyprian gave to their petition we may perhaps discern a new cause of their irritation against the bishop. A comparison of what Cyprian says respecting the intrigues of Novatus, ep. 49, with what he says respecting the intrigues of those five presbyters, ep. 40, and with what Pontius reports about the old adversaries of Cyprian, favours the supposition that there was but one anti-Cyprian faction, which held together from the beginning, and in which Novatus took a prominent part.

† See Cyprian, ep. 49, of Novatus: *Qui Felicissimum satellitem suum diaconum, nec permittente me nec sciente, sua factione et ambitione, constituit*. All goes to show that this nomination of Felicissimus to the office of deacon preceded the schism of which he was the author; although, from our imperfect knowledge of the circumstances, the whole matter is involved in much obscurity.

point certainly not so clearly made out, at a time when the struggle between the aristocratic and monarchical principles of church government was as yet undecided. Cyprian permitted Felicissimus to retain his office; whether it was out of deference to a powerful party, or whether it was that subsequently the hostile proceedings of Felicissimus forced him to declare his ordination irregular and a violation of the episcopal authority. In the outset it would seem he avoided all violent measures; by indulgence and gentleness, and with a prudence befitting the circumstances, he sought to gain over his opponents.\* Perhaps he might have succeeded, if only he had exercised sufficient self-control to follow out this course with patience; or if the Decian persecution, which broke out soon after, had not furnished the opposite party too inviting an opportunity to commence a public attack on the man whom from the very first they had unwillingly seen placed at the head of the church.

We have already observed that at the commencement of this persecution Cyprian withdrew for a while from his church. He had, as we then saw, good reasons, indeed, to justify this step; and the best of all justifications was his subsequent martyrdom. Still it was a step which would admit of being differently interpreted. His enemies were glad to look upon the thing in its worst light, and accused him of allowing himself to be influenced by cowardice to desert his pastoral duties.†

Besides this, the party opposed to Cyprian had many opportunities, arising out of the persecution, to increase the number

\* To this doubtless refers what Pontius says of Cyprian's conduct towards his opponents: Quibus tamen quanta levitate, quam patienter, quam benevolenter indulsit, quam clementer ignovit, amicissimos eos postmodum inter et necessarios computans, mirantibus multis!

† We remarked at page 185 that the Roman clergy expressed themselves but doubtfully with regard to Cyprian's conduct; their words, "quod utique recte fecerit," indicate that his enemies had contrived to represent the matter in an unfavourable light. Hence Cyprian intimated a suspicion that the letter in which passages occurred which were so strange to him might be a forgery (ep. 3). Afterwards, when he learned that his adversaries had represented his conduct in an unfavourable light at Rome, he considered it necessary to justify himself by a correct account of the whole course of the affair, and he writes thus to the Roman clergy (ep. 14): Quoniam comperi, minus simpliciter et minus fideliter vobis renuntiari, quæ hic a nobis et gesta sunt et geruntur.



of their followers, and to excite men's minds against the bishop. During the persecution, many who, either from fear or violence, had been driven to violate the duties of confessors of the faith, had been excluded from the communion of the church. Most of these, however, were afterwards seized with compunctions of remorse, and longed to be restored to the fellowship of the brethren, and to the privilege of partaking of the Lord's supper. The question now arose, Ought their wishes to be forthwith complied with?—or is their petition absolutely to be rejected?—or shall a middle course be followed, by holding out to them the hope, indeed, of being restored to the fellowship of the church, but still subjecting their conduct to a longer probation, and requiring evidence of continued contrition, before they should be again thought worthy of that great privilege? Is the same course to be pursued with all the lapsed, or ought their treatment to vary according to the circumstances and enormity of their offences? At this date the church was without any generally admitted principles of penance in such cases. One party, as we have lately observed, refused to grant absolution, on any conditions, to such as had violated their baptismal vow by one of what they designated as mortal sins. In accordance with that Jewish principle, which apparently did not regard *all* duties alike as *duties to God*, and *all* sins alike as sins *against God*, an arbitrary distinction was made—in support of which appeal was made to 1 Samuel ii. 25—between sins against God and against man. In the former class was reckoned every act of denying the faith, though, as in the case where the denial was simply the consequence of weakness of sense, the degree of guilt might be far less than that involved in some of the so-called sins *against man*. Cyprian, who was in the habit of calling Tertullian especially his teacher,\* might, perhaps, from the study of that father's writings, have received a bias towards the principles of the more rigid party with regard to penance. Many passages of his works, written previous to the Decian persecution, would lead us to conclude that he had formerly held the principle that absolution should be granted to none who had committed a mortal sin. Thus, for instance, he says,† “The

\* According to Jerome, *de vir. illustr.* When Cyprian asked for Tertullian's works, he used to say to his secretary, “Da magistrum.”

† *De habitu virginum.*

words of the Lord, who warns while he heals, are 'Behold, thou art made whole; sin no more, lest a worst thing come unto thee.' After he has bestowed health he gives the rule of life; nor does he allow men afterwards to run about unbridled, but, as the man was bound to serve him by the very fact that he had been healed by him, our Lord threatens him with the greater severity; for the guilt is less to have sinned before one has known the doctrines of the Lord, but *when one sins after he has begun to know them there is no place for forgiveness.*"\* It may be said, perhaps, that in this case Cyprian meant simply to mark the *greater* criminality of a sin committed by a *Christian*, and that the passage is to be understood only in a relative sense; but assuredly more than this is implied in one of the positions laid down by him in his collection of Biblical Testimonies†—"That to him who has sinned against God no forgiveness can be granted in the church."‡ Besides the passages already cited from the Old Testament,§ he quotes on this occasion that from the gospel relating to the sin against the Son of man and against the Holy Ghost, in such a manner as to make it plain how greatly he misunderstood these conceptions and this antithesis.

But if Cyprian, when he first entered on the episcopal office, was an advocate of *this* principle, yet, regarding his church as he did with a most fatherly heart, he could not but be shaken by the great multitude of the lapsed, who entreated him, sometimes with bitter tears of repentance, to grant them absolution. Were all these—many of whom, as, for example, the libellatici, had only fallen from lack of knowledge, and others from the weakness of the flesh under the severity of torture—to remain for ever excluded from the blessed communion of the brethren, and, in Cyprian's view, from that church in which alone lay the way to heaven? The paternal heart of the bishop revolted at the thought, but he dared not act here upon his own responsibility. In this state of indecision he gave it

\* *Nulla venia ultra delinquere, postquam Deum nosse cœpisti.*

† *De testimoniis, l. III. c. 28.*

‡ *Non posse in ecclesia remitti ei, qui in Deum deliquit.*

§ The same texts which Cyprian quotes in the epistle to the clergy of Carthage, ep. 9, on the subject of denial of the faith under persecution. So also in ep. 11 we find the antithesis: *Minora delicta, quæ non in Deum committuntur.*



as his opinion that the fallen were not to be shunned, but exhorted to repentance; though the final decision on their case must be reserved to the time when, on the restoration of tranquillity, the bishops, clergy, and churches, in common and calm deliberation, should, after examining the question in all its bearings, be able to agree upon some general principles with regard to a matter which so deeply concerned every Christian. Besides, there was a great variety in the offences of the fallen brethren. Some, merely to avoid the sacrifice of their worldly possessions, had without a struggle hastened even to the altars of the gods; while others had fallen through ignorance or under the force of torture. The disorders of the times made it impossible to examine carefully into the several offences and the difference of moral character in individuals. Moreover, those that had fallen must in the mean time, by giving practical proof of their penitence, render themselves worthy of re-admission to the communion of the church,—and the persecution itself presented them with the best opportunity for this. “He,” says Cyprian, “who cannot endure the delay may obtain the crown of martyrdom.”

It was under this view of the case that Cyprian acted. He directed all the lapsed who applied for absolution to look forward with hope to the restoration of tranquillity, when their cases should be examined. But some of the clergy, and, as Cyprian afterwards learned, his old adversaries, espoused the cause of these men, and, instead of exhorting them to peace and submission, in obedience to the wishes of the bishop, they encouraged them in their importunate demands, availing themselves of this opportunity to foment the wished-for division in the church.

Had, however, the lapsed been upheld in their importunate demands by none but the presbyters opposed to Cyprian, their opposition to the measures of the bishop would have been less fruitful in consequences. But they found means to gain over to their cause a voice which in those days had great influence with the Christians,—the voice of those confessors of the faith who had given their testimony of the Lord under the pains of torture, or who, after having given it, went to confront martyrdom. It was altogether consonant with the spirit of Christianity that the last legacy of such men should be a *legacy of love*; that their last words should be

*words of love* to their brethren; that they who, having victoriously sustained the conflict, were about to enter into glory, should show sympathy for their weaker brethren, who had fallen in the struggle; that, finally, they should recommend the lapsed, or fallen, to the charitable consideration of the church. It was just and right, moreover, that the word of these witnesses of the faith should be held in peculiar respect, provided only it were not forgotten that they too, like all others, were sinful men, needing the forgiveness of their sins, and that they, so long as they were in the flesh, had also to maintain the struggle with the flesh; and provided only, these witnesses of the faith themselves did not forget this, and, undazzled by the excessive veneration which was paid them, had still remembered that it only exposed them the more to the lurking enemy with which even they, as sinful men, had still to contend, and so did not turn the momentary victory which, by the grace of God, they had gained, to the nourishment of a spiritual pride. Many yielded to this temptation; and controversies were excited and nourished by such confessors. The poet Commodian, so distinguished for his moral enthusiasm, thought it necessary to remind such persons that even by their sufferings they could not expiate sin.\* There were confessors who, in an authoritative tone, conferred on all who sued to them for it the peace of the church, and acted as if nothing was needed but their voice for the absolution of the fallen. Many of the clergy, who, as Cyprian exhorted them, ought to have set them right and to have led them to humility, rather confirmed them in their delusion, using them as tools in their machinations against the bishop. The bishops were often placed in no slight embarrassments by their peremptory declarations, which were often very vaguely expressed, like the following: "Let such an one, *together with his*,"—an expression admitting of interpretations and applications without limit,—"be received into the communion of the church." †

\* See his *Instructio*, 47:—

Impia martyribus odio reputantur in ignem,  
Distruitur martyr, cujus est confessio talis,  
Expiari malum nec sanguine fuso docetur.

† Communicet ille cum suis. According to Cyprian, ep. 14, thousands of such "*libelli pacis*" were daily given by the confessors without examination. Tertullian, as early as the close of the second century, speaks of this practice as a traditional one. "*Pacem in ecclesia non habentes*, a



Those who applied these indefinite declarations to themselves now boasted that the confessors or martyrs had granted them absolution, and they would hear of no delay, submit to no trial of their conduct. Since Cyprian was the less willing to comply with their importunate demands the less they evinced of true contrition and humility, he rendered himself extremely unpopular by his resistance. In two respects he appeared in an unfavourable light: he was disliked both for his severity to the lapsed and his lack of reverence for the confessors.\*

Cyprian fulfilled his duty as a pastor when he firmly and energetically opposed the exaggerated reverence paid to these confessors (which was likely to become a fruitful source of superstition), as well as the false confidence in their intercession, which might mislead men to feel secure in their sins. He called the attention of the confessors to the truth, that true confession is not an *opus operatum*, but that it must consist in the whole course of the life and conduct. "The tongue," he said, "which has confessed Christ, must be preserved pure and undefiled in its dignity; for he who, according to our Lord's precept, speaks what tends to peace, to goodness, and to truth, confesses Christ daily." In warning them against false security and pride, he observes,† "It must be your endeavour that what you have happily begun may be perfected in you. It is but little to have been able to *obtain*; it is more to be able to *preserve* what you have obtained. Our Lord taught us this when he said, 'Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.' So also think thou that He says to a confessor, 'Behold, thou art made a confessor; sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee?' In fine, Solomon and Saul and many others were able, so long as they walked in the ways of the Lord, to

martyribus in carcere exorare consueverunt." Ad martyr. c. 1. As a Montanist he speaks warmly against the excessive abuse to which this practice had been carried; and intimates that many were made to feel secure in their sin by these libelli pacis, so inconsiderately bestowed by the confessors (de pudicitia, c. 22). Against the abuses which grew out of these commendatory letters of the confessors, whether spurious or genuine, the council of Elvira speaks on this wise, c. 25: Quod omnes sub hac nominis gloria passim concutiunt simplices.

\* He himself gives us to understand how much he had to suffer on this account, ep. 22: Laborantes hic nos et contra invidiæ impetum totis fidei viri us resistentes.

† Ep. 6.

retain the grace which was given them; as soon as the fear of the Lord departed from them. His grace also left them. I hear that some are elated with pride; and yet it is written, 'Be not high-minded, but fear.'—Rom. ix. 20. Our Lord 'was led as a sheep to the slaughter; as a lamb before her shearers is dumb, so opened he not his mouth;' and dares any one now, who lives by Him and in Him, to be proud and high-minded, forgetful of the life which He led, and of the doctrines which He has given us either by Himself or by His apostles? If the servant be not greater than his Lord, then let those that follow the Lord walk humbly, peaceably, and quietly in His footsteps: the more one humbleth himself, the more shall he be exalted."

When a certain confessor, Lucian, "in the name of Paul, a martyr" (in obedience to whose last injunctions he professed to be acting), bestowed the peace of the church on the fallen brethren, and gave them the so-called certificates of church-fellowship (*libellos pacis*), Cyprian refused to acknowledge their validity, and observed, "Although our Lord has commanded that all nations should be baptized and receive forgiveness of their sins in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, yet this man, in ignorance of the divine law, proclaims peace and remission of sins in the name of Paul;—he does not consider that the martyrs make not the gospel, but the gospel the martyrs."\* To the same purpose did he express himself in the discourse already referred to, delivered on his return to his church.† "Let no man deceive himself, the Lord alone can show mercy. He alone can pardon the sins which are committed against Himself who bore our sins; who suffered for us; and whom God delivered up for our offences. The servant may not forgive the sin that has been committed against his Master, lest the offender contract additional guilt by being unmindful of what is written, 'Cursed is he that putteth his trust in man.'—Jer. xvii. 5. We must pray to the Lord, who has said that he will deny those that deny him, who alone has received all judgment from the Father. Do the martyrs wish anything?—what they wish must be written in the law of the Lord;—we must know, first of all, that they

\* Quod non martyres evangelium faciant, sed per evangelium martyres fiant. Ep. 22.

† Sermo de lapsis.



have obtained from God what they wish, and then only can we do what they require; for it by no means follows, as a matter of course, that the Divine Majesty will grant what a man has promised. Either then the martyrs are nothing, if the gospel can be made void; or if the gospel cannot be made void, then they have no authority to act against the gospel, who by its means become martyrs. *That man can neither say nor do anything against Christ, whose faith and hope, whose power and glory are nowhere but in Christ.*"

Cyprian, however, was not sufficiently firm and consistent in his opposition to the extravagant honour which was paid to the martyrs and confessors. He was himself, in a degree, carried away by the spirit which prevailed among the multitude, and which he ought to have controlled and guided by the spirit of the gospel. When the summer heats of an African climate produced many cases of sickness, he yielded so far as to grant absolution to those of the lapsed who in sickness and the fear of death desired the communion, and supported their demand by such certificates given them by confessors to the faith.\* In his report to the Roman church he assigns, as his reason for so doing, his wish, by a compliance in this particular, to assuage, in some measure, the violence of the multitude, and so to counteract the machinations of those who were at the bottom of the mischief, and to relieve himself from the obloquy of refusing to the martyrs due honour and respect.†

Thus, by his half-resistance to the violence of this erroneous tendency, and by his inconsistency, Cyprian did injury both to the interests of Christian truth and to his own cause. If, on the one hand, he combated a false confidence in the martyrs' intercession with the weapons of truth, on the other hand he supported it by his compromise; for must not the recommendation of a martyr have become invested with a peculiar value and influence as soon as it was understood that all who were supported by such a testimonial might in the hour of death, simply on the strength of this recommendation, obtain

\* Cyprian, ep. 12, 13, et 14.

† Ep. 14: "Ad illorum violentiam interim quoquo genere mitigandam —, cum videretur et honor martyribus habendus, et eorum qui omnia turbare cupiebant, impetus comprimendus." Of the other lapsi, on the contrary, he says, ep. 13—"Qui nullo libello a martyribus accepto invidiam faciunt:" it was therefore this invidia which he feared.

the peace of the church and receive the communion, while many who had *not* sought such a recommendation must still be deprived of these comforts, even though, as it might easily happen, they were distinguished above those who had secured it by the sincerity of their contrition and penitence? \* Such a conclusion, which his conduct naturally encouraged, Cyprian further favoured by his very language in making this concession, addressing it "to those who, by help of the martyrs, obtain succour from the Lord in their sins." † By this inconsistency he laid open to his enemies a weak spot, of which they would not fail to take advantage.

Another circumstance which must have particularly strengthened the opposite party in their support of the lapsed was the powerful voice of the Roman church, which had declared itself in favour of the milder principle; not indeed in every case, but at all events in that of the sick. Cyprian also avowed that, in making his concession, he was partly influenced by his respect for the Roman church, with which he had no wish unnecessarily to be at variance. ‡ But the latter church would have acted more consonantly with the spirit of evangelical truth had it directed the fallen to the one and only Mediator, and had it recognised no other distinction among them but that of a penitent or impenitent disposition. § In the first letter that it addressed to the clergy of Carthage, the Roman church had said of the lapsed—"We have, indeed, separated them from us, yet we have not left them to themselves; we have exhorted them, and do still exhort them, to repent, if haply they may obtain pardon from Him who alone can grant it. We do this that they may not, being deserted by us, become worse. If such persons are attacked by sickness, become penitent for their offences, and anxiously desire the communion, they should by all means be assisted."

Yet, by Christian prudence in the rest of his conduct; by contriving to unite mildness with energy; by his instructions, and his friendly, paternal representations, whereby he won over the better disposed among the confessors; by the firm-

\* See note †, preceding page.

† Auxilio eorum adjuvari apud Dominum in delictis suis possunt.

‡ Ep. 14: to the Roman clergy. Standum putavi et cum vestra sententia, ne actus noster, qui adunatus esse et consentire circa omnia debet, in aliquo discreparet.

§ Ep. 2.



ness with which he withstood the obstinate opposition of the presbyters ; by the love and esteem in which he was held by the majority of the church ; Cyprian seemed to have succeeded in restoring tranquillity to Carthage, and he was rejoicing in the hope, as the fury of the Decian persecution began to abate, of returning to the church from which he had been painfully separated for a whole year, and of celebrating with its flock the Easter feast, A.D. 251. But ere his hopes could be realized he had to learn that the intrigues of his opponents were too deeply laid, and too closely and firmly interwoven, to be so easily confounded. The fire which was smouldering in secret only wanted an opportunity to break forth into an open flame. This occasion Cyprian himself furnished by the exercise of his episcopal authority in an important matter.

Before his return to Carthage he had sent two bishops and two presbyters as his deputies, with full powers to hold a visitation. To such of the poor as from age or sickness could do nothing for their own support, they were to assign so much out of the church chest as might be necessary for the supply of their bodily wants. To those who, having a trade, were unable to gain from it enough for their subsistence, or who wanted money to purchase the tools and stock necessary for carrying on their avocations, or who, having been ruined in their business by the persecution, now wished to commence it again, they were to make such grants as might appear advisable in the several cases. Finally, they were to draw up a list of all the poor who were to be supported out of the church funds, distinguishing their ages and their behaviour during the persecution, in order that the bishop, whose care it was to make himself accurately acquainted with all their circumstances, might promote the worthy, and, as in this case was particularly specified, the *meek* and the *humble*, to such offices in the church as they might be qualified to fill. The latter regulation secured this advantage,—such persons would, according to their abilities, be suitably employed in the service of the church, so as to secure for themselves an adequate support, while at the same time a burden would be removed from the church funds. The qualifications of *meekness* and *humility*, to which particular attention was to be directed, were peculiarly necessary in *those* who entered into the service of the church during such a period of ferment and disturbance, if peace was to be

restored to it on a solid foundation and the first germs of division suppressed. The presbyterian party opposed to Cyprian may not have admitted the bishop's right to hold such a visitation, or to make such a distribution of the church funds on his own responsibility and without the concurrence of the presbyterial college; or at least they may have disputed the right in *Cyprian*, since they were unwilling to own him any longer as their bishop. At any rate it would be quite contrary to their plans to allow him to carry out such an act of episcopal jurisdiction; for it must tend to confirm his authority, to bind the church more closely to him, and thereby to strengthen his party. At the head of the opposition in this instance was the deacon *Felicissimus*. His official character alone would give him considerable influence with a portion of his congregation, for in the church of North Africa as well as in that of Spain, which so closely resembled it in many things,\* the deacons had more power than they possessed in other countries. Moreover, from circumstances with which we are but imperfectly acquainted, he had become an influential organ of his party. Perhaps, too, as a portion of the church funds was intrusted to his care,† he may have thought himself especially called

\* Concil. Illiberit. c. 77: *Diaconus regens plebem*.

† That in the North African church it belonged to the deacons to keep and manage the church funds we learn from the 49th letter of Cyprian, where *ecclesiasticæ pecuniæ sacrilega fraude substractæ et viduarum ac pupillorum deposita denegata* is brought as a charge against a deacon. And this was the case not only in North Africa, but also in the churches of quite an opposite quarter of the world; as we learn from Origen's complaints against those deacons who enriched themselves at the expense of the church (in Matth. T. XVI. c. 22): *Οἱ μὴ καλῶς διάκονοι διοικούντες τὰ τῆς ἐκκλησίας χρήματα, ἀλλ' αὐτοὶ μὲν ταῦτα ψηλαφῶντες, οὐ καλῶς δὲ αὐτὰ οἰκονομοῦντες, ἀλλὰ σωρεύοντες τὸν νομιζόμενον πλοῦτον καὶ χρήματα, ἵνα πλουτῶσιν ἀπὸ τῶν εἰς λόγον πτωχῶν διδομένων, οὗτοι εἰσιν οἱ κολληβίσται τραπέζας χρημάτων ἔχοντες, ὧς κατέστρεψεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς*. It is with reference to this fact that *Felicissimus* is accused of "fraudes" and "rapinæ," ep. 55. *Pecuniæ commissæ sibi fraudator*. Similar charges were brought against Novatus, the presbyter and presiding officer of the church in which *Felicissimus* was deacon. True, these accusations, as coming from the mouth of their enemy Cyprian, cannot be considered as irrefragable testimony against them. An independent application of that portion of the church funds which was deposited in this daughter-church,—an application of them which, with the views they entertained of their relation to the bishop, they may have thought themselves warranted to make,—an application suited perhaps to the objects and ends of their party,—may, by Cyprian, have been regarded as



upon to put in his word on a matter that concerned the application of the money of the church. Accordingly Felicissimus employed all his arts of persuasion, his influence and power, to excite a general and determined spirit of opposition to this episcopal ordinance. In particular, to the poor of the church of Novatus, over which he had been made deacon, he declared that he would contrive means of providing without fail for all their wants, and threatened, if they appeared before these episcopal commissioners, never again to admit them to the communion in his church.\* This church now became the general resort of all the lapsed who were unwilling to wait with patience the decision of the whole matter. Here, without any previous preparation, they were at once admitted to the communion—here was the rallying point of all the disaffected; a circumstance which must have been attended with the most prejudicial effects on the discipline and order of the whole church.

an embezzlement. At all events, the want of an impartial statement of the whole matter leaves it impossible to make any confident assertion either way.

\* Everything here depends on the correct reading and interpretation of those difficult words in Cyprian, ep. 38: "*comminatus, quod secum in morte,*" or "*in monte non communicarent qui nobis obtemperare voluissent.*" If we take the reading "*in morte,*" then the meaning might be two-fold. By referring the phrase "*in morte*" to Felicissimus, then it might mean that at his own death he would not acknowledge them as Christian brethren,—would pronounce them excluded from church fellowship,—in other words, would never be reconciled to them. In this case, however, it would be difficult to see how a threat of this kind could be so dreadful a thing to the Christians at Carthage. If, however, by a more natural construction, the phrase "*in morte*" be referred to the subject understood in "*communicarent,*" the meaning might be that they, at their death, should not be admitted by him to the fellowship of the church,—should not receive from him, as deacon, whose office it was to convey the consecrated elements to the sick, the Lord's supper. The latter interpretation gives a good sense, if we bear in mind that Felicissimus was deacon of a particular parish church, and that he acted in agreement with Novatus, the priest and pastor of this church; so that it was in his power to refuse the communion to those who dwelt in this part of the diocese. An analogous sense results if the reading "*in monte*" be adopted. In this case we must suppose that the congregation over which Novatus and Felicissimus were placed resided on an eminence in or near by Carthage; and this brings to mind the Montenses, the Donatists at Rome, who were so called from their place of assembly, which was situated on a hill. Felicissimus threatened to exclude those that complied with the requisition of Cyprian from communion in this church.

It was these troubles which induced Cyprian to defer his return to Carthage until after the Easter of 251. He chose this particular moment because he could reckon on the other bishops of North Africa being by that time assembled there for the annual synod. This would secure to him two advantages: united with the whole body of his North African colleagues, he would be able to make a firm stand against the refractory, and by the synod adopting, after mature deliberation, certain settled principles for the treatment of the lapsed, he might hope that a limit would be set to the hitherto wavering practice of the North African church in the matter of penance. In this council of the North African church it was resolved to adopt a middle course between the excessive severity which cut off the lapsed from all hope, and the opposite extreme of a lax indulgence; to uphold the discipline of the church, and yet not to drive the fallen to despair by refusing to them unconditionally and for ever absolution and readmission to the communion of the church, since this might drive them at length to abandon themselves to their lusts, or to sink back again into heathenism. First of all, the different circumstances of their offences were to be carefully investigated,\* and, in cases of mortal sickness at least, the communion was to be administered, the *sacrificati* even not being excepted, if by their conduct they had evinced the truth of their penitence. Should such persons recover they were not to be deprived of the privilege they had obtained by the grace of God, but were to remain in the fellowship of the church.† Afterwards, when the persecution was renewed with increased violence, a further indulgence, prompted by Christian charity and wisdom, was conceded. The communion was to be granted to *all who had given evidence by their conduct of true penitence*; and the intention of this indulgence was that they should not enter the conflict unarmed, but rather strengthened by having partaken of the Lord's body.‡ They, on the other hand, who had not given the least evidence of repentance in any of their actions, and never expressed a desire for the communion till they came to lie on the sick-bed, should not then receive

\* The different degree of guilt in the *sacrificati*, according to the different ways in which they had been induced to renounce the faith; and so also in the *libellatici*.

† Ep. 52.

‡ Ep. 54.



it, since it was evidently not sorrow for sin, but the warning of approaching death, that had prompted the wish, and *he* was not worthy of receiving consolation in death who had never thought of death till it is close at hand. In these regulations we clearly recognise a truly Christian endeavour to call men's attention to the essence of true repentance, and to warn them against the error of reposing a false confidence on the opus operatum of absolution and the communion.\* But by this purely Christian anxiety the synod, we see, allowed itself to be misled into pronouncing a sentence, in its general form harsh and indiscriminate, against those whose first signs of repentance were made at the hour of death; for although, in most cases, such repentance might be false, resulting from mere sensuous impressions, yet in some, known only to the Omniscient, it might also be true. And it is clear that the synod, without resorting to this unwarrantable decision, might have secured its object by a more correct and clearer exposition of the nature of absolution in relation to the forgiveness of sin. At this synod sentence of condemnation was passed on the party of Felicissimus; and thus, by the support of the bishops of North Africa, Cyprian succeeded in putting an end to the schism.

The party, it is true, did not at once give up their opposition. They sought to gain adherents in this part also of the church; and they were joined by several of the African bishops, who were at variance with their other colleagues, or who had been deposed for their bad conduct. They chose Fortunatus, one of the five refractory presbyters, as bishop of Carthage, in the place of Cyprian. Sending deputies to Rome for the purpose of gaining to their side this principal church of the West, they demanded a hearing for the charges which they had to bring against Cyprian; but although by their clamours they excited a momentary sensation, they were unable to dissolve the bond of friendship existing between the two most influential bishops of the West. In a letter which expresses in a remarkable manner the Jewish-Christian notion of the church theocracy administered by the priesthood,† Cyprian urged the Roman bishop to defend against the schismatics the unity of the church as founded on the union of the bishops. In the same letter however he strenuously contends

\* Ep. 52.

† Ep. 55 ad Cornel.

for the independence of the bishops in their own dioceses. "Since it has been decided by us all," he writes, "and is, moreover, just and right, that every man's cause should be examined into on the spot where the wrong was done, and since to every pastor *his own part* of the flock has been allotted, which he is to guide and govern as *one who must render to the Lord an account of his stewardship*, those who are under our jurisdiction ought not to run about, and by their deceptive arts and effrontery to disturb the harmony of the united bishops, but they should be obliged to prosecute their cause where the accusers can be confronted with the accused."

It is clear, we think, even from this statement of the case, which is drawn from the reports of one party only in the dispute, that Cyprian's conduct in this controversy was not wholly free from reproach; and we should, perhaps, find still more to censure were we able to compare the charges and recriminations of both parties. In this respect particular notice is due to a letter of Cyprian,\* addressed to one of his opponents, Florentius Pupianus, who, having maintained a good confession under the pains of torture, enjoyed high consideration as a martyr; for as this letter is in answer to another, we may gather from it what Pupianus had to object against Cyprian. Although not free from that error of the *separatist* tendency which attaches undue importance to subjective views and feelings, as is evident from the way in which he speaks of all Cyprian's supporters as polluted and contaminated, he nevertheless appears to have been a pious well-meaning man, who was certainly not indisposed to listen to reason. Having referred to many charges against Cyprian, of which we possess no distinct information, he asserted that he felt a scruple which must be removed before he could hold communion with him as a bishop.† He reminds him that priests should be humble, as even our Lord and his apostles were humble.‡

Cyprian, by virtue of a mental temperament not uncommon

\* Ep. 69.

† This we gather from Cyprian's answer: *Dixisti, scrupulum tibi esse tollendum de animo, in quem incidisti.*

‡ *Sacerdotes humiles esse debere, quia et Dominus et Apostoli ejus humiles fuerunt.*



in North Africa, was inclined to lay too great stress on unusual psychological phenomena, on presentiments, visions, and dreams, and thus, by confounding the natural with the divine, was exposed to many delusions. When he ought to have maintained his positions on rational grounds, he perhaps insisted on the voice of the Spirit, which, on such occasions, he seemed to hear; but Pupian disdained these evidences.\*

Cyprian's reply to this person was certainly not calculated to remove his scruples. Without entering into the matter of his opponent's charges, Cyprian does nothing but insist on the inviolable authority of the bishop ordained of God, and declares it impiety for any man to set up himself as a judge over the *judicium Dei et Christi*. He maintains that, as the bishop stands in communion with the whole church, so the church rests on the bishop; and whoever separates from the bishop, separates from the church.† His hierarchical assumption filled him with dreams and visions, which he pronounced divine revelations. Thus he declared that he had heard a divine voice, saying, "He that believes not Christ, who appoints the priest, will be compelled to believe him when he avenges the priest."‡ In proof of the necessity of paying obedience to the bishop, he adduces the fact that even the bees have a queen whom they obey, and robbers a captain whom they follow in all things. Moreover, the way in which he appeals to the testimony of Christians and pagans concerning his humility seems scarcely suited to refute what Pupian had said respecting his want of that virtue.§

Cyprian wrote this letter in the year 253 or 254,—for according to his own statement he had then administered the episcopal office for a period of six years. At this time, however, the conventicles where the holy supper of the Lord was distributed to the seceding party still continued.|| Pupian

\* As may be inferred from Cyprian's words: *Quoniam sciam somnia ridicula et visiones ineptas videri.*

† Unde scire debes, episcopum in ecclesia esse, et ecclesiam in episcopo; et si quis cum episcopo non sit, in ecclesia non esse.

‡ Qui Christo non credit sacerdotem facienti, postea credere incipiet, sacerdotem vindicanti.

§ Humilitatem meam et fratres omnes et gentiles quoque optime novunt et diligunt; et tu quoque noveras et diligebas, cum adhuc in ecclesia esses et mecum communicares.

|| As Cyprian himself gives us to understand, when he says, *Frustra*

had reproached him also with this, alleging that it was by his fault that a part was separated from the whole church.\* Commodian, who wrote his Christian Admonitions at a somewhat later period, found it still necessary to reprove this schismatical tendency, which, as often happens, was perhaps kept up for a short time even after the occasion was forgotten which had first called it forth. He rebukes those who see the motes in others' eyes, but cannot discern the beam that is in their own.†

The second schism had its origin in the Roman church; and as, in suppressing the first, Cornelius of Rome coöperated with Cyprian of Carthage, so in this we see Cyprian joining with Cornelius to maintain the unity of the church. Like the former, the latter division sprang out of a dispute as to the election of a bishop, and from the collision of opposite opinions with regard to the penances of the church. There was, however, this difference, that in the former case the schism arose with the laxer party, in the latter with the more rigid one. The immediate occasion which led to the actual outbreak of this schism, as well as of the other, were occurrences which took place during the persecution of Decius. We have already observed that in the Roman church the general sentiment inclined to the milder view in the matter of penance; there was, however, even in that church, a more rigid party, the head of which was *Novatian*, a presbyter of some distinction, having made himself known as a theological writer.

We are, however, without further and accurate information as to the character of this man, such as would enable us to form any certain conclusions how far his views on this question and his whole conduct in the affair were influenced by the peculiar bent of his disposition. For the sayings of his exasperated enemies, and statements which bear throughout

sibi blandiri eos, qui, pacem cum sacerdotibus Dei non habentes, obrepunt et latenter apud quosdam communicare se credunt.

\* Scripsisti quoque, quod ecclesia nunc propter me portionem sui in dispenso habeat.

† Cap. 66:—

Dispositum tempus venit nostris. Pax est in orbe  
Et ruina simul blandiente seculo premit  
Præcipitis populi, quem in schisma misistis.  
Conspicitis stipulam cohærentem in oculis nostris,  
Et vestris in oculis non vultis cernere trabem.



the marks of passionate exaggeration, are of course entitled to no credit. If we endeavour to separate the real facts from the distorted and spiteful representations of Novatian's opponents, the following presents itself as the most probable state of the case:—Violent internal conflicts had thrown Novatian, a man of an earnest frame of mind, into a state similar to that usual among those labouring under demoniacal possession. This was for him, as it was for so many others of that period, the hard way to faith. It was to the prayer of an exorcist of the Roman church that he,—who had perhaps already been touched in various ways by the power of Christianity,—owed his restoration for the moment. From this violent convulsion of his whole being he fell into a severe sickness, which eventually resulted in his entire and radical cure. In the course of this sickness his faith became established, and, believing death to be at hand, he received baptism on the sick bed. He found in Christianity peace, rest, and a healing power. As he now distinguished himself by steadfastness in the faith—the clearness of his Christian knowledge—(to which his writings bear witness)—for a happy facility in teaching—and for a zeal for holiness, which afterwards led him to adopt an ascetical life, Bishop Fabian ordained him presbyter, disregarding the fact that it was on the bed of sickness that he had first made profession of the faith and been baptised. The Roman clergy were from the first dissatisfied with this procedure; because they maintained the *letter* of the law, that no individual who had been baptised on a sick bed,—no *clenicus*,—should receive ordination; but the wiser Fabian interpreted this law according to its *spirit*\* rather than its *letter*, for its object was simply to keep out of the spiritual order those who had, without true repentance, conviction, and knowledge, received baptism in the momentary alarm produced by the fear of death. In Novatian's case every suspicion of the kind was refuted by his subsequent life. For a season he had

\* As it is expressed in the 12th canon of the council held at Neo Cæsarea, A.D. 314; which, after declaring that a person baptized in sickness could not be consecrated as a presbyter, assigns as a reason "that such faith did not spring from free conviction, but was forced" (οὐκ ἐκ προαιρέσεως γὰρ ἡ πίστις αὐτοῦ, ἀλλ' ἐξ ἀνάγκης). Hence, too, an exception was made in favour of subsequent zeal and faith (διὰ τὴν μετὰ ταῦτα αὐτοῦ σπουδὴν καὶ πίστιν). This exception would apply to Novatian.

exchanged the practical life of an active clergyman for the noiseless seclusion of the ascetic; but afterwards, as soon perhaps as he was made the head of a party, he was induced once more to resume the active duties of his office.\*

\* It is here particularly important to consult the synodal letter of Cornelius, bishop of Rome, to Fabius, bishop of Antioch. A fragment of it has been preserved by Eusebius (l. VI. c. 43). This letter deserves notice as illustrating that tendency of the ecclesiastical spirit to confound the outward with the inner life, which, at an early period, became markedly prominent, especially at Rome. It is urged as an objection against Novatian, that his restoration from a demoniacal frenzy, as it was called, by exorcists of the Roman church, had been the means of his conversion. Whether this were the case or not, no reproach surely could attach to Novatian's character as a Christian from the circumstances which had led him to embrace Christianity. Not less wanting in good sense than unworthy of a Christian is the reproach of Cornelius, that Satan was the occasion of Novatian's faith (ὅτι γὰρ ἀφορμὴ τοῦ πιστεῦσαι γέγονεν ὁ σατανᾶς); as if the works of evil do not often become subservient to the foundation and increase of the kingdom of God. It is further objected to him, that, after his restoration from this demoniacal disease, he fell into a severe fit of sickness (which may be very naturally explained; the crisis in his whole organic system, for which he was indebted to the restoration from his frenetic state, was the cause of the sickness), and that in the fear of death he received baptism, but baptism only by sprinkling, as his condition required (the baptismus clinicorum not being by immersion, which was the usual practice of those times), if it could be said, indeed, that such a one had been baptized at all. It is objected, moreover, that subsequently he received none of those rites which should have been bestowed on him according to the usages of the church,—such, *e. g.*, as confirmation by the hand of the bishop. “*How then could he possibly have received the Holy Ghost?*” (All this is quite characteristic of the outwardness and passionate prejudice of the growing hierarchical spirit of the Roman church!) A bishop of Rome, probably Fabian,—the letter goes on to say,—ordained him presbyter, against the wishes of the rest of the clergy, who objected to the ordination of a person who had been baptized by sprinkling, on a sick bed. (The bishop, probably a man of more liberal spirit, wished in this case to make an exception.) Cornelius again objects that during the prosecution Novatian had, out of fear, shut himself up in his chamber, and was unwilling to leave it to perform the duties of his office in behalf of such as needed his help. When his deacons asked him to do this, he turned them off with the reply that “he was the friend of another philosophy.” Here, to be sure, we have nothing but conjecture to help us to the real fact, which the hatred of Cornelius may have misrepresented. Probably by the *ἐπίστα φιλοσοφία* may be understood the secluded life of the ascetic as compared with that of the practical ecclesiastic. Novatian may have retired, for a season, into solitude, and withdrawn himself from his public duties. This is in keeping with the austere character which speaks out in his principles of



Some slight allusions in Cyprian by no means suffice to prove that Novatian, previous to his conversion, had been a stoic philosopher, and that the spirit of the stoical ethics, mingling with his Christianity, had produced the severity of his sentiments on these matters. As his principles admit of a natural explanation from the sternness of his Christian character, and as in this case he acted entirely in the spirit which in his time actuated a whole party of the church, there is little need to refer them to an outward source, especially in the absence of all historical evidence.\*

Here a question arises of considerable importance, the right decision of which will materially assist us in forming a right judgment both on the matters in dispute, and on the character of Novatian. It is this :—Was his opposition directed in the first place against Cornelius as bishop, or against the milder principles of church penance? To judge, indeed, from the accusations of his passionate opponents, it would seem that in the outset an ambitious desire of the episcopal dignity induced him to excite these troubles in the church, and to place himself at the head of a party. If it could be proved that during the Decian persecution he had belonged to the milder party, it would indeed give probability to the assertion that external inducements had driven him to those extremes. Now in this persecution, the Roman clergy, being at the time without a bishop at their head, had sent to Cyprian, bishop of

penitence; and it might be as an ascetic that he owed his high consideration with the church. It was wrong perhaps in Novatian to listen to the promptings of a false asceticism, and to forget Christian charity so far as to refuse to leave his spiritual quiet and solitude, and help the brethren who needed his priestly consolations; but Cornelius may have allowed himself to invent for his conduct on this occasion another motive inconsistent with Novatian's character.

\* It is by no means clear that even Novatian's opponents seriously thought of deriving his peculiar views from any such origin. If Cyprian objects to these views that they are more stoical than Christian (cp. 52 ad Antonian), naturally this refers simply to their character, and not to their origin; and when he upbraids him, "*Jactet se licet et philosophiam vel eloquentiam suam superbis vocibus prædicet*," the first may seem an allusion perhaps to the *πίβαν*, the pallium of the *ἀσκητής* (see the preceding note), or to the fame of a distinguished dogmatic writer which Novatian had acquired as author of the work *De regula fidei*, or *De trinitate*. Thus, too, Cornelius speaks of him in the above-cited letter as *Οὗτος ὁ δογματιστής, ὁ τῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς ἐπιστήμης ὑπερασπιστής*.

Carthage,\* a letter in which he was informed of their opinion that absolution ought to be granted at the extremity of death to all lapsed persons who manifested true penitence;—a sentence at variance with the principles of the more rigid party, which unconditionally excluded from the absolution of the church all who had been convicted of *peccata mortalia*. And yet, according to Cyprian's testimony, this letter was composed by Novatian.† But even if Cyprian's account be perfectly correct, yet from a letter setting forth the common decision of a college of presbyters no certain inference can be drawn as to the personal opinions of the individual who composed it; for possibly nothing more than the form and style of composition were his. It might be that Novatian at this time may have thought it right to submit to the majority, though afterwards he felt himself bound to oppose it. And indeed the same letter contains an intimation that a final and settled decision on these controverted matters would be best made after the restoration of peace, and the election of a new bishop. Novatian, therefore, although himself inclined to severer measures, might the more readily yield for the moment to a milder course, the more he saw a hope that, when the matter should be finally discussed and determined, an authoritative sanction would be given to his own principles. Moreover, in the same letter, he expresses himself doubtfully enough as to the value of the absolution imparted in such cases.—“God only knows,” he says, “how He will dispose of such, and by what rule He will judge them.”‡ This language does indeed intimate the writer's own opinion that absolution could not with propriety be granted to such persons—that they ought to be simply commended to the divine mercy, and the decision of their fate left with God; although we would not deny that any one of the milder party might consistently enough express himself thus from a conviction of the deceitfulness of all outward signs of penitence.§ If Novatian generally performed

\* Ep. 31.

† He says, for instance, ep. 52, of this letter, *Novatiano tunc scribente et quod scripserat, sua voce recitante.*

‡ *Deo ipso sciente, quid de talibus faciat et qualiter judicii sui examinet pondera.*

§ Thus Cyprian, ep. 52: *Si nos aliquis pœnitentiæ simulatione deluserit, Deus, qui non deridetur, et qui cor hominis intuetur, de his quæ*



at this time the function of secretary to the Roman church,\* he must also be considered as the writer of a still earlier letter,† composed in the name of the Roman clergy, in which the same principles are advanced as in the second. If this were the case, then what we have just said respecting the relation of the writer's own opinions to the views expressed in the communication of a public body must be applied also to this letter.‡ It was never objected to Novatian that his later views contradicted his earlier and published convictions; and it easily admits of explanation, if the opposition of the more rigid party did not assume a decided attitude until the close of the persecution, when the final deliberations respecting the treatment of the lapsi commenced, and when the milder party had obtained a leader in the person of their bishop Cornelius. We have the less reason to doubt that a zeal for the more rigid principles inspired Novatian from the first since they accorded so perfectly with his character. The accusations of his opponents should not be allowed to embarrass us, for it is the usual way with theological polemics to trace schisms and heresies to some outward, unhallowed motive, even in the absence of all proof. When the Roman bishopric was vacated by the death of Fabian, Novatian had on some occasion solemnly declared that he would not be a candidate and had no longing for the episcopal dignity—to which, however, on account of the high respect which a large portion

*nos minus perspeximus, judicet, et servorum suorum sententiam Dominus emendet.*

\* Which, however, cannot be certainly inferred from the testimony of Cyprian already cited. For it is left doubtful whether it was by a mere accident that Novatian composed that letter, or whether he wrote it in his official capacity. We must allow it, however, to be not improbable that the theological author, in a church where learning and talent for composition were not so common, would be made the church secretary.

† The letter we have cited already at page 185, note †, and page 314, note †.

‡ In this letter, too, the subjective opinion of the writer *may* gleam through the language, where he speaks of the admonitions given to the fallen: "*Ipsos cohortati sumus et hortamur, agere pœnitentiam, si quo modo indulgentiam poterunt recipere ab eo qui potest prœstare,*"—though the words do not *necessarily* express as much. In the severity of tone with which this letter speaks of those bishops that forsook their communities we might likewise recognise the sentiments of the more rigid Novatian.

of the community entertained for him as an ascetic and a divine, he might, perhaps, easily have attained. We have no reason, with Cornelius, to accuse Novatian in this case of perjury. He could say this with perfect sincerity; he, the ascetic loving repose, the theologian desiring to be left undisturbed to his dogmatic speculations, surely had no wish to burden himself with an office so overwhelmed with cares as that of a Roman bishop had already become. Cornelius indeed knew that he *secretly* sighed after the episcopal dignity: but whence had Cornelius the eye to search into the secrets and inmost recesses of his opponent's heart? Cyprian himself intimates that a party strife *concerning principles*, which in the outset had been wholly objective, had commenced the dispute; and it was not until this dispute made a schism inevitable that the opposite party set up another bishop as their chief against Cornelius.\* His ascetic zeal led Novatian to contend simply for what he conceived to be the purity of the church, against the decay of discipline, without wishing or seeking for anything besides. Settled in his own convictions, zealous and ardent in their defence, but by natural disposition insensible to all unquiet and external influences, he was, against his own will, made the head of a party by those who agreed with him in principles, and he was by them compelled to assume the episcopal dignity. In this regard he could, in his letter to Dionysius bishop of Alexandria, appeal with truth to the fact "*that he had been hurried on against his will.*"†

The man who was really the *active soul* of this party, and to whose influence, doubtless, it was owing that they broke entirely with Cornelius and elected another bishop for themselves, came from a different quarter. *Novatus*, the Carthaginian priest, who had been the chief instigator of the troubles in the church of North Africa, had left that country when Cyprian gained the upper hand, either because he no longer agreed with the principles of Felicissimus, and yet would not be reconciled to Cyprian and acknowledge him for his bishop, or simply because his intrigues against the latter

\* Cyprian, ep. 42: *Diversæ partis obstinata et inflexibilis pertinacia non tantum matris sinum recusavit; sed etiam, gliscente et in pejus recrudescente discordia, episcopum sibi constituit.*

† Οτι ἄκων ἤχθην. Euseb. l. VI. c. 46.



had totally failed. Betaking himself to Rome, he found there the germs of a dispute. His temperament did not allow him to lie idle and neutral where strife and agitation were going on. According to the principles which, in common with the other four presbyters and Felicissimus, he had advocated at Carthage, he ought to have sided with Cornelius.\* But whether his views on the matter in dispute had undergone a change (either under the influence of Novatian, his superior in theoretical theology, or as a consequence of an excitable temperament ready to pass from one extreme to another), or whether, feeling no real interest in the object of dispute, either at Carthage or at Rome, he was, in his way, ready to sympathise everywhere with a party in opposition; whether he was inclined to espouse the cause of any party which had *no bishop at its head*, or whether he hated Cornelius for other reasons—it is enough for us that Novatus passionately adopted and contended for the principles of Novatian. Wherever he might be, at Carthage or at Rome, he was the very man to become the moving spring of agitation, while he placed another at the head under whose name everything was to be done. It may therefore have been through *his* active influence that the schism assumed a more decided character, and that Novatian was forced by his party to oppose himself, as bishop, to Cornelius.

As to the latter, in his treatment of those who during the persecution of Decius had fallen from their steadfastness he had been governed by the milder principles of the church. He had admitted many to the communion of the church who were accused at least by the other party of being *sacrificati*. He was therefore charged by Novatian and his followers with polluting the church by the admission of the unclean. On both sides great liberties were taken in ascribing the actions of

\* Mosheim defends Novatus against the reproach of inconsistency, by recalling the fact that he was not one of the five presbyters, and that he agreed with these and with Felicissimus, not in every respect, but only in their opposition to Cyprian. But the evidence above cited stands in the way of this assertion. The strongest argument which Mosheim brings in support of his own view is, that Cyprian, who raked up every possible charge against Novatus, *never* accuses him, even when he had occasion for so doing, of inconsistency. But it is possible that Cyprian was loth to touch on this point, because he might fear a retort on account of his own change of principles.

the opposite party to secret motives, calculated to place them in the most unfavourable light. As Cornelius had charged Novatian with acting under the impulse of an ambitious longing after the episcopal dignity, so a part at least of Novatian's followers ascribed the mildness of Cornelius towards others to the consciousness of similar guilt; he himself, as they affirmed, was a libellaticus.\* Both parties endeavoured, as was usual in such disputes, to secure on their own side the verdict of the great metropolitan churches of Alexandria, Antioch, and Carthage, and both sent deputies to them. The zeal shown by Novatian for the strictness of discipline and the maintenance of purity in the church (the honesty of which his own life avouched), and the authority of certain confessors who in the beginning were united with him, procured for his deputies a favourable reception. One bishop, Fabius of Antioch, was even on the point of deciding in his favour. Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, a man of a mild, moderate, and liberal mind, was from the beginning opposed to the Novatian principles; but he tried first of all by friendly arguments to induce Novatian to submit. In reply to his application† he wrote, "If you have, as you say, been urged on against your own will, you will best prove this by voluntarily retracting; for there is nothing you ought not to be willing to suffer rather than create a schism in the church of God. And martyrdom endured for the sake of preventing schism would be not less glorious than martyrdom to avoid being an idolater; nay, in my opinion, it would be nobler,—for in the one case you become a martyr for the peace of your own soul, in the other for the good of the entire church. If, then, you now either persuade or constrain the brethren to unanimity, the good you would thus do would exceed the evil which you have caused. The latter will not be laid to your charge, and the former will redound to your praise. But even if others should refuse to follow you, and you cannot accomplish so much, hasten at any rate to save *your own* soul. Hoping that you may follow after peace, I bid you farewell in the Lord." But Novatian was too deeply rooted in his opinions, and carried away too far by the ardour of controversy, to listen to such representations. The amiable Dionysius, therefore, now declared decidedly against him, and used his influence also to

\* Cyprian, ep. 52.

† Euseb. l. VI. c. 46.



detach others from his party. He accused him of promulgating the most mischievous doctrines about God, and of calumniating the compassionate Saviour as an unmerciful being.\*

Novatian might however have reckoned more confidently on support in North Africa, where Cyprian himself had formerly been inclined to similar principles on the matter of penitence. But Cyprian, as we have already observed, had changed his views and his practice, and thus exposed himself to the charge of inconsistency and fickleness of mind.† At the same time he looked upon Novatian as a disturber of the unity of the church, who set up himself against a bishop regularly chosen and appointed by God himself, and who would prescribe his own peculiar principles as laws for the entire church.

The controversy with the Novatian party turned upon two general points:—1. What are the principles of penitence? 2. What constitutes the idea and essence of a true church? In regard to the first, Novatian has often been unjustly accused of maintaining that no person, having once violated his baptismal vows, can ever obtain forgiveness of sin, but is sure of eternal damnation. But, first, Novatian by no means maintained that a Christian is a perfect saint. He spoke not of all sins, but, assuming as valid the distinction already mentioned between “*peccata venialia*” and “*peccata mortalia*,” he was treating only of the latter. Again, what he said did not by any means apply to the *divine forgiveness of sin*, but only to the judgment of the church—the *absolution* of the church. The *church*, he meant to say, has no right to grant absolution to a person who, by any mortal sin, has scorned the pardon obtained for him by Christ, and appropriated to him by baptism. No counsel of God, with regard to such persons, has been revealed; for the forgiveness of sin, which the gospel assures us of, relates only to sins committed before baptism. We ought doubtless to take care of those who have thus fallen, but nothing can be done for them beyond exhorting them to repent, and commending them to the mercy of God. “*The sacrificati*,” Novatian

\* Euseb. l. VII. c. 8 : Τὸν χρηστότατον κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν, ὡς ἀνελίῃ συκοφαντοῦντι.

† Ep. 52 : Ne me aliquis existimet, a proposito meo leviter recessisse.

wrote,\* “must not be received to the communion; they should only be exhorted to repentance,—the forgiveness of their sins must be left to that God who alone has power to forgive sin.” That this was Novatian’s doctrine, even Cyprian,—though in the heat of controversy he did not always keep it in mind,—evidently presupposes, when he says,† “Oh, what mockery of the deluded brethren, what an idle deluding of those afflicted and unhappy men,—to exhort them to a repentance whereby they are to satisfy God, and yet deprive them of the salvation to which through this satisfaction they are to attain! To say to your brother, Mourn, and shed tears, and sigh day and night, abound in good works, so thou mayest wash away thy sins, but after all thou shalt die *out of the pale of the church!* Thou must do all that pertains to peace; but the peace thou seekest thou shalt not obtain! Who would not give up at once? Who would not sink in very despair? Think you the husbandman could labour, were it said to him ‘Bestow all diligence and care on the culture of your fields, but you shall reap no harvest’?” It must be admitted that, even in what he here says, Cyprian does not enter sufficiently into his opponent’s train of thought, and is not quite fair towards him. For it was by no means Novatian’s doctrine that all the exertions of such a penitent were to no purpose. He maintained *only* that the church had no warrant to promise him the desired forgiveness which divine grace might bestow.

In the outset, as we see from Novatian’s explanation contained in the passage just quoted from Socrates, the question in this controversy related only to *one of those offences* which were generally classed among the peccata mortalia, the denial, viz., of Christianity. On the supposition that Novatian was at first thus severe against *this* class of offences alone, Cyprian was right in opposing absolutely the moral standard which must have been the basis of such a mode of judging, and in resolutely combating the notion that merely *such* offences were to be denominated sins against God, denial of God, denial of Christianity; as if every sin were not a sin against God, a practical denial of God and of Christianity. “Surely,” says Cyprian,‡ “the sin of an adulterer and deceiver is more heinous than that of the libellatici; for the latter fall into sin

\* Vid. Socrat. l. IV. c. 28.

† Ep. 52.

‡ Ep. 52.



through compulsion and under the wrong impression that it is simply enough not to have sacrificed, while the former sins of free choice. Adulterers and deceivers, according to the apostle Paul, Eph. v. 5, are as idolaters." "For since our bodies are the members of Christ, and each of us is a temple of God, whoever by adultery defiles God's temple, offends God himself; and whoever by committing sin does the will of Satan, worships evil spirits and false gods: for evil works proceed not from the Holy Spirit, but from the instigations of the adversary, and evil desires born of the unclean spirit lead men on to act against God and to serve the devil."

But afterwards, at least, the Novatian party expressly applied their principle to the whole class of "mortal sins;" which application Novatian himself most probably had in mind from the beginning, though the immediate occasion of the controversy led him to speak of one description only of mortal sins. The ascetic was assuredly not disposed to treat sins of voluptuousness with too much indulgence.

Again, in the passage from Socrates, Novatian speaks of those only who had sacrificed. But if Cyprian does not misrepresent Novatian, he most unjustly, in the outset at least, placed in the same category all who during the persecution had in any way proved unfaithful, as well libellatici as sacrificati, without any discrimination of the various degrees of guilt, or of the difference of the attendant circumstances, utterly refusing absolution to all alike, without considering how many of the libellatici were guilty rather of an error and mistake of the understanding, than of an actual sin.

The manner in which Cyprian combated these principles of Novatian \* beautifully attests the spirit of Christian charity and sympathy which animated him. Having supposed the case of many libellatici, whose conscience did not reprove them of any crime, being tempted, by despair, to tear themselves away with their families from the church, and to seek admission into some heretical sect, he observes—"At the day of judgment it will be laid to our charge that we took no care of the unsound sheep, and, on account of one that was diseased, left many sound ones to perish; that while our Lord left the ninety-and-nine whole sheep, and went after the one that had wandered and become weary, and, when he had found

\* Ep. 52.

it, brought it away himself on his shoulders, we not only do not seek after the lost, but even reject them when they return." He contrasts with this severity several passages from the apostle Paul (1 Cor. ix. 22; xii. 26; x. 33, &c.), and then adds—"The case stands differently with the philosophers and stoics, who say all sins are equal, and that a steadfast man should not easily be brought to bend. But the difference is great betwixt philosophers and Christians. We must avoid whatever proceeds, not from God's grace, but from the pride of a cold philosophy. Our Lord says, in his gospel, 'Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful;' and 'the whole need not a physician, but the sick;' but such a physician he cannot be who says, I heal only the sound who need no physician. Behold, yonder lies thy brother, wounded in battle by the adversary. On the one hand, Satan seeks to destroy him whom he has wounded; on the other, Christ exhorts us not to leave him to perish whom he has redeemed. Which cause do we espouse? on whose side do we stand? Do we help the devil to finish his work of destruction? Do we, like the priest and the Levite in the gospel, pass by our brother lying half dead? Or do we, like priests of God and of Christ, following our Lord's precepts and example, rescue the wounded man from the grasp of his enemy; that, having done everything for his salvation, we may leave the final decision of his case to the judgment of God?"\*

Beautifully and truly said as all this was, in opposition to *the spirit* of Novatianism, yet Novatian's principles were neither touched nor refuted by it. Even Novatian admitted that the fallen brethren must be looked after and exhorted to repentance. He too acknowledged God's mercy towards sinners, and allowed it right to commend the lapsed to that mercy; but that the forgiveness of sins they had once forfeited should be again made over to them, this he was unwilling to allow, because he could find no objective ground for such a confidence. The only way in which he could be effectually answered was by pointing out such an objective ground of confidence for all sinners—the merits, namely, of

\* Ut curatum Deo judici reservemus; upon the supposition, that is, that absolution cannot forestall God's judgment, but is only valid at the divine tribunal when God, who tries the secrets of the heart, finds the temper of the man to correspond with this absolution.



Christ, which the sinner needed ever but to appropriate to himself by faithful penitence and trust whenever the true relation is unfolded between the objective and subjective elements of justification and regeneration. But on this point Novatian's opponents themselves had not very clear views; for though, in opposing his principles, they did indeed sometimes refer to 1 John ii. 1, 2, yet in so doing they expressed themselves as if the forgiveness of sin obtained by Christ related properly to those sins alone which had been committed before baptism, and as if in respect to sins committed afterwards there was need of a new and special satisfaction by good works. This position once taken, Novatian might fairly ask, who can vouch for it that such a satisfaction will suffice?

With regard to the second main point of the controversy,\* the idea of the church, Novatian maintained that, purity and holiness being one of the essential marks of a true church, every church which, neglecting the right use of discipline, tolerates in its bosom, or readmits to its communion, such persons as, by gross sins, have broken their baptismal vow, ceases by that very act to be a true Christian church, and forfeits all the rights and privileges of a true church. On this ground the Novatianists, as they held themselves to be alone the pure immaculate church, called themselves "*οἱ καθαροί*," the Pure. It was rightly urged against Novatian that individuals are responsible and punishable only for their own sins, and not for the sins of others in which they had no share; that it is only the inner communion of the heart with sinners, not outward fellowship with them, that is defiling; and that it was but the arrogance of human pride to pretend to the exercise on earth of that judicial separation between the true and false members of the church which the Lord has reserved to himself. On this point Cyprian finely remarks, "Though the tares are manifest in the church, this should not disturb our faith or our charity so far as to lead us to separate ourselves from the church itself because there are tares in it. Our thoughts should rather be directed to this, that we ourselves

\* Pacianus, of Barcelona, who wrote in the latter part of the fourth century, concisely expressed the two main positions of Novatian in these words: "Quod mortale peccatum ecclesia donare non possit, immo quod ipsa pereat recipiendo peccantes." Ep. III. contra Novatian. Galland. bibl. patr. T. VII.

belong to the wheat, so that when the grain is gathered into our Lord's garner we may receive the reward of our work. The apostle says, 'In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour and some to dishonour. Let us labour with all diligence, that we may be vessels of gold or of silver. To dash in pieces the earthen vessel belongs to the Lord alone, to whom is also given the rod of iron. The servant cannot be greater than his master; and no man may appropriate to himself what the Father has given only to his Son; nor believe himself able to wield the fan in order to purge and cleave the floor, or to separate, by his merely human judgment, every tare from the wheat.'

But even here men were unable to find the real and decisive point for the confutation of Novatianism; on the contrary, Novatian and his opponents were involved in the same fundamental error, and differed only in their application of it: and this fundamental error, was that of confounding the notions of the visible and of the invisible church. Hence was it that Novatian, transferring the predicate of purity and unspotted holiness which belongs to the invisible church, the community of the saints as such, Eph. v. 27, to the visible form in which it manifests itself, concluded that every church which suffered unclean members to remain in it ceased to be a true branch of the one church. The same error of confounding the inward with the outward church, which led to Novatian's false application of the predicates of the church, is also betrayed in his assertion that a person is made impure by outward fellowship with the impure in the same church communion. But the opponents of Novatian, while they started with the same fundamental error, differed from him *only* by laying at the basis of their speculations the notion of the church as carried on and sustained by the succession of bishops, and then deriving the predicates of purity and holiness from that notion. The church, transmitted and propagated by the succession of bishops, was, in their view, as such, a pure and holy one. Novatian, on the other hand, laid at the basis of his theory the visible church as pure and holy, and these qualities were, in his view, the essential conditions of the truly catholic church. The catholic church, though carried on by the succession of bishops, ceases, in his opinion, to be a truly catholic one as



soon as it becomes stained and desecrated through the fellowship with unworthy men. The more objective or subjective tendency made all the difference between the two parties in their application of the same fundamental principle.

Now, instead of distinguishing different applications of the notion of the church, Cyprian was contented to distinguish simply a *twofold condition of one and the same church*, its state on earth and its state in glory, when the separation shall have been made complete by the final judgment. Entangled in this fundamental error of confounding external things with internal, it happened on a subsequent occasion, when the controversy with Novatianism was no longer before his mind, that he himself came very near to the Novatian principles, declaring to certain Spanish churches\* that by tolerating unworthy priests they themselves would be defiled; that they who remained in communion with sinners would become themselves partakers of their sins.†

Out of this controversy the system of the catholic church, so firmly established and exactly compacted in all its parts, came forth victorious; and if in the following centuries Novatianists still survived, it was only as an insulated and insignificant sect.

\* Ep. 69.

† Consortes et participes alienorum delictorum fieri, qui fuerint delinquentibus copulati.

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## SECTION THIRD.

## CHRISTIAN LIFE AND CHRISTIAN WORSHIP.

*Christian Life.*

EVER since Christianity first entered into human nature, it has operated, in all cases where it has struck root, with the same divine power of sanctification; and this divine power cannot be weakened by the lapse of ages. In this respect, therefore, the period of the first appearance of Christianity could possess no preëminence over any of the following ages of the church. One peculiarity, however, marked this first period. The change wrought by Christianity in the convictions and actions of its converts could not fail to be more striking through the contrast it presented with what they had once been as pagans. Thus the apostle St. Paul, in writing to Christians converted from paganism, reminds them of what they once were, when they walked according to the course of this world, according to the spirit that worked in the children of disobedience; and after enumerating some of the prevailing vices of the corrupt heathen world, says to them, "And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of God." Teachers of the church, who had been heathens, frequently appeal to such effects which they themselves had experienced. Thus Cyprian, under the first glow of conversion, witnesses of it:—"Receive from me what must be felt ere it is *learned*, what is not collected from a long course of continued study, but seized at once, by the power of grace, which hastily consummates its work. While I lay in darkness and blind night, driven backwards and forwards by the waves of the world, ignorant of the way of life, estranged from the truth and from the light, what divine mercy promised for my salvation seemed to me, in my then state of mind, a hard and impracti-

\* Ad Donat.



cable thing ;—that a man should *be born again*, and, casting off his former self, while his bodily nature remained the same, become in soul and disposition another man. How, said I, can *such a change* be possible—that what is so deep-rooted within should be extirpated at once? Entangled in the many errors of my earlier life, from which I could see no deliverance, I abandoned myself to my besetting sins, and, despairing of amendment, nurtured the evil within me as if it belonged to my nature. But when, after the stains of my former life had been washed away in the laver of regeneration, light from on high was shed abroad on a heart now freed from guilt, made clear and pure ; when I breathed the spirit of heaven, and was changed by the second birth into a *new* man, then did that which before appeared so doubtful become most evident. That lay open, which before had been shut to me ; that was light, where I had seen nothing but darkness ; that became easy, which before was impossible ; practicable, which before seemed impracticable ; so that I could understand how it was that, being born in the flesh, I had lived subject to sin—leading a worldly life, whereas the life I now began to live was the commencement of a life proceeding from God, and quickened by the Holy Spirit. From God, from *God*, I repeat, proceeds all we are now able to do ; from Him we derive life and power.” Justin Martyr also thus describes the change produced in Christians :\*—“ We, who were once slaves of lust, have now delight only in purity of morals ; we, who once practised arts of magic, have consecrated ourselves to the Eternal and Good God ; we, who once prized gain above all things, now give even all that we have to the common use, and share it with every one that is in want ; we, who once hated and murdered one another, and on account of differences of customs would not share our hearth with strangers, do now, since the appearance of Christ, live in common with them ; we pray for our enemies ; we seek to teach them even who hate us without cause so to order their lives according to Christ’s glorious doctrine that they may hold the joyful hope of receiving like blessings with us from God, the Lord of all.” Origen, in the same way, appeals to the effects wrought by Christianity in the communities scattered through the world, as evidence of the truth of the evangelical history. “ The work of Jesus,”

\* Apolog. II.

he says,\* “reveals itself among all mankind, where exist churches of God, founded by Jesus, consisting of men reclaimed from a thousand vices; and still further, the name of Jesus produces a wonderful mildness, decency of manners, humanity, goodness, and gentleness in *those* who embrace the faith in God and Christ, and of the judgment to come, not hypocritically, for the sake of worldly advantage and human ends, but in sincerity and in truth.”

As the contrast of Christianity with paganism—which is none other than that of the old with the new man—is more strongly marked in some periods of the life of the same individual than in others, so was it also in comparing the Christian life with the pagan as a whole; for the opposition now stood forth open and undisguised, since paganism did not as yet seek to hide itself under any foreign guise. To this contrast Origen referred when he said, “Compared with the communities among whom they dwell, the communities of the Christians are as lights in the world.”†

The inducements to a mere outward Christianity that arose in later times,—the worldly advantages attached to the profession of Christianity as the religion of the state,—habit, which leads so many without any special reasons or inward vocation to adhere to the religion of their fathers,—all this, in the period of which we treat—especially the early part of it—could effect nothing for Christianity. The majority of Christians forsook a religion recommended to them by education, by the reverence for antiquity, by the power of habit, by the worldly benefits attached to its observance, for one which had *against it* everything that was in *favour* of the other, and which from the very first required of them many sacrifices, and exposed them to many dangers and sufferings.

Still we must know very little of human nature to believe that in any period whatever there could be a total absence of causes that tend to produce a conscious or unconscious hypocrisy in the reception of Christianity. Even in this period there existed many such inducements, particularly in those

\* c. Cels. l. I. s. 67: Ἐμπροσὶ δὲ θανουμένην πραότητα καὶ καταστολήν τοῦ ἡθους καὶ φιλανθρωπίας καὶ χρηστότητος καὶ ἡμερότητας ἐν τοῖς μὴ διὰ τὰ βίωτικὰ ἢ τινὰς χρείας ἀνθρωπικὰς ὑποκεινμένοις, ἀλλὰ παραδιδυμένοις γνησίως τὸν περὶ Θεοῦ καὶ Χριστοῦ καὶ τῆς ἐσόμενης κρίσεως λόγον

† c. Cels. l. III. c. 29.



longer intervals of peace which the church occasionally enjoyed. Thus Origen says, "There has always been a great diversity among those who sought Jesus, for all did not seek him in the genuine way, for the sake of their own salvation, and to receive advantage *from Him*. There are those who seek Jesus from various wrong motives. Hence it is, too, that they alone have found peace with Him, who sought Him in the right way—of whom it may with propriety be said that they sought Him as the *Word* which was in the beginning and was with God, and for the purpose of obtaining from him fellowship with the Father." \* The charity, too, of the Christians offered a strong temptation to many to add themselves to the church without being Christians by conviction and in the temper of their minds. This may be inferred from the passage last cited from Origen; and Clemens of Alexandria, too, speaks of those who, for the sake of temporal advantages, hypocritically made profession of Christianity.†

But to pass over these pretended Christians, even those hearts on which some seed of the gospel had lodged still illustrated our Lord's parable of the sower. Not in every heart that the seed fell on did it find the congenial soil in which it could spring up immediately and bring forth fruit. In this period, as in all others, there would be those who had been for a moment touched by the power of truth, but who, not making a right use of the impressions they had received, proved faithless to the truth, and, instead of consecrating to it their whole life, wished to serve God and the world at the same time, and so became at last once more completely enslaved to the world. He who did not watch his own heart, who did not constantly, with fear and trembling, seek, under the guidance of the divine Spirit, to separate in his inmost being that which is of the Spirit from what was of the flesh, was exposed to the same causes of dangerous self-delusion as others, and consequently to all the temptations to sin which arise therefrom. There are certain general sources of self-delusion, having their seat in human nature itself, to which ultimately all particular forms of it may be referred. If these

\* Orig. T. XIX. in Joh. s. 3: Εἰσὶ γὰρ καὶ κατὰ μυρία ἀποπειστικαὶ τοῦ καλοῦ προθέσεις ζητοῦντες τὸν Ἰησοῦν.

† Stromat. I. f. 272: Μεταλήψεις χάριν τῶν κοσμικῶν προστάσεων, κοινω- νικοῦς τῶν ἐπιτηδείων μαθόντες τοὺς καθωσιωμένους τῷ Χριστῷ.

are different in their outward manifestations, it is only according to the difference of circumstances. But there are also particular sources of self-delusion, which belong to different ages of the world. And indeed all external circumstances, even what, considered in itself, may be most advantageous for man, is yet capable, if the true light has not risen within him, or if he does not watch over his own heart, of becoming an occasion of self-delusion. Of nothing outward, of no situation, relations, or circumstances, can it be unconditionally affirmed, that by them *vital Christianity must necessarily* be promoted. That which may further it in one man, may to another be an occasion of stumbling and a fall.

The striking opposition between the life of Christians and that of pagans contributed to preserve the purity of the Christian consciousness and conduct, and to guard both against many a debasing admixture. But here, also, that what awakened many Christian virtues, and in general served to promote the Christian sentiments in some, became to others a source of self-delusion, as soon as they began to fancy that by a stern rejection of everything pagan they could satisfy all the requisitions of Christianity, and so made of this an *opus operatum*. They were thus led to understand the warfare with the world in an outward sense, consequently to overlook the internal conflict with the world within; and thus spiritual pride and uncharitable fanaticism were fostered.

Many even of those who had been led to Christianity by a deep-felt religious want fell into a mistake which hindered them from rightly adopting the gospel, and from giving themselves up to its divine intrinsic power. The longing after a reconciliation with God and forgiveness of sin lay, as we have already seen, at the root of much of the superstition of this period; but this longing presented itself as yet under a rude and carnal shape. Such a craving eagerly welcomed the annunciation of a Redeemer, and the promise of the cleansing of all sin by baptism; but this was the very source of the delusion which carnally misapprehended what Christianity proposed. Such persons sought in Christ, not a Saviour from sin, but the bestower of an outward and magical annihilation of sin. Transferring their pagan notions to Christianity, they sought in baptism a magical lustration, which should render them at once wholly pure. Without



doubt that outward view of the church and the sacraments, of which we have already spoken, presented a support to this erroneous notion. Hence it was that many who meant to embrace Christianity delayed their baptism for a long time, that they might meanwhile surrender themselves without disturbance to their pleasures, hoping to be made quite pure at last by the rite of baptism. Against such delusions Tertullian thus expresses himself :\*—"How foolish, how wrong it is, to put off the duty of repentance, and yet expect the pardon of sin ; that is exactly, not to pay the price, and yet reach out the hand for the goods : for it has pleased the Lord to fix *this* price on the forgiveness of sin. As, then, those that sell, first examine the money which is offered for the goods, to see that it is neither worn, filed, nor counterfeit, so we may suppose that the Lord also first makes trial of our penitence before he bestows on us so inestimable a treasure as eternal life. The divine grace, the forgiveness of sin, remain unimpaired for all who will come to baptism ; but we must do our part in order to become capable of receiving it. Thou mayest, it is true, easily steal into baptism, and by thy protestations deceive him whose business it is to confer it on thee. But God watches over his own treasure,—he will never suffer it to be surreptitiously obtained by the unworthy. In whatever darkness thou mayest veil *thy* work, yet God is light. But many fancy that God must perform, even to the unworthy, what he has once promised, and thus turn his free grace into a debt." Tertullian appeals to experience in proof that those who come in this spirit to baptism cannot manifest the fruits of Christianity, and that such persons, building their house on the sand, often fall away from their steadfastness. Against such people Origen remarks that the whole benefit of baptism depends on the disposition of the recipient and on the truth of the penitence with which he comes to this ordinance ; that, on the other hand, in him who is destitute of such penitence, baptism redounds only

\* In his book de pœnitentia, c. 6 : Quam ineptum, quam iniquum, pœnitentiam non adimplere et veniam delictorum sustinere, hoc est, pretium non exhibere, ad mercedem manum emittere. Hoc enim pretio Dominus veniam addicere instituit ; hac pœnitentiæ compensatione redimendam proponit impunitatem. Si ergo qui venditant, prius nummum, quo paciscantur, examinant, ne scalptus, neve rasmus, ne adulter, etiam Dominum credimus, pœnitentiæ probationem prius inire, tantam nobis mercedem perennis scilicet vitæ concessurum.

to condemnation; that the spirit of renovation therefore which accompanies baptism is not shared by all.\* In order to guard against the mistake of such seeming Christians, Cyprian, in his Collection of testimonies for a layman (*libri testimoniorum*), having laid down the position that no man can attain to the kingdom of God unless baptized and regenerated, adds, "It is, however, nothing to be baptized, and to receive the communion, if the person does not in his life give evidence of reformation."† And he cites in proof of this, from the New Testament, the following appropriate passages: 1 Cor. ix. 24; Matt. iii. 10, v. 16, vii. 22; Philipp. ii. 15. He then proceeds to say that "even the baptized person will lose the grace bestowed, unless he continues pure from sin;" citing in evidence the following passages of warning: John v. 14; 1 Cor. iii. 17; 2 Cor. xv. 2.

It belonged, indeed, to the essence of Christianity, that while it could become all things to all men, and adapt itself to the most different and opposite circumstances of human nature, it could condescend even to wholly sensuous modes of apprehending divine things, in order, by the power of a divine *life*, working from within, gradually to spiritualize them. In our estimate, therefore, of the religious phenomena of these primitive times, we should be on our guard against allowing the sensuous modes of feeling and thinking which such men brought with them from their habits and associations to bias our judgment respecting those who might really be wanting in nothing but the appropriate vessel to receive the transcendent divine element that filled their inner life. In this respect the great saying of the apostle may often have found its application, that the divine treasure was received—and for a season preserved—in earthen vessels, that the abundant power might be of God and not of man. When, however, in men of this kind, the sensuous element greatly predominated, and they would not surrender to the purifying influences of the Spirit of Christ, then must every motion of the higher life necessarily have become vitiated by this sensuous element, and in the end wholly suppressed. Every Christian quality was transformed into some carnal shape and secularized; was thus divested of

\* T. VI. John, c. 17.

† L. III. c. 25, 26: Parum esse baptizari et eucharistiam accipere, nisi quis factis et opere proficiat.



its true meaning. Thus they apprehended Christ and his kingdom. Even though the expectation of some future state of sensual bliss, of which their excited imaginations drew pictures ravishing to their fleshly minds, gave them the strength to deny the pleasures of the moment, and even to face tortures and death, yet they might notwithstanding be strangers to the true nature of the new birth, by which alone the kingdom of God can be entered; they were wanting in the spirit of illuminating love.

Far be it from us, then, to look for any such manifestation of the church in which it should be found without spot or blemish—a state never to be realized till the final consummation. Nor do the apologists of Christianity in this period deny the existence of such blemishes. They acknowledge that among those who called themselves Christians were some who by their lives contradicted the essence of Christianity and gave occasion to the heathen to blaspheme; only they declare that such were not recognised as Christians by the Christian churches; and they challenge the heathen to judge every man by his life, and to chastise those whose morals deserved it, wherever they found them. Thus Justin Martyr and Tertullian express themselves.\* The latter says, “If you assert that the Christians are, in avarice, in riotousness, in dishonesty, the worst of men, we do not deny that some *are* so. In the whitest skin some freckle doubtless may be discovered.” But let us not be led away by these blemishes on the surface of the church, to overlook the heavenly beauty which shone through them all. When the eye is fixed exclusively on the one or the other, the picture may be easily worked up to a perfect ideal, or to a distorted caricature. An unbiassed observation will avoid both extremes.

That which our Lord himself, in his last conversation with his disciples, declared to be the mark by which his disciples were always to be distinguished—the mark of their fellowship with Him and His Father in heaven, and the mark of His glory dwelling among them—namely, that they should love one another,—this was the prominent mark of the first Christian communion, and one which chiefly struck the very heathens as remarkable. The titles of “brother” and “sister,” which the Christians gave to each other, were not empty names.

\* Ad nationes, l. I. c. 5.

The kiss of brotherhood, which, after baptism, was given to every one on his reception into the church, by the Christians into whose immediate fellowship he then entered—which the members of the same church bestowed on each other just before the celebration of the communion, and with which every Christian saluted his brother, even when he saw him for the first time—this was no unmeaning form, but it was originally the expression of Christian feelings—a token of the relationship which Christians believed to subsist among one another. It was this fact, as we have already had occasion to remark, which, in a cold and selfish age, struck the pagans with wonder—that men differing by nation, rank, circumstances, and education should be so intimately bound together, that the stranger who arrived at any city should, as soon as, by his *epistola formata*, he had made himself known to the Christians of the place as a brother beyond suspicion, find at once, from those to whom he was personally unknown, all brotherly sympathy and support.

The care of providing for the support and maintenance of strangers, of the poor, the sick, and the aged, of widows and orphans, and of those who were in prison on account of their faith, devolved on the whole church. This was one of the main purposes for which the collection of voluntary contributions, during public worship, was instituted; and the charity of individuals, moreover, led them to vie with each other in doing still more. In particular, it was considered as one of the duties of the Christian matron to provide for the poor, for the brethren languishing in prison, and to show hospitality to strangers. Accordingly the hindrances to the discharge of such Christian virtues is, by Tertullian, reckoned among the disadvantages of a mixed marriage. "What heathen," says he, "will suffer his wife to go about from street to street and into the houses of strangers and the meanest of hovels, for the purpose of visiting the brethren? Will he allow his wife to steal into the dungeon to kiss the chain of the martyr? If a brother arrives from abroad, what reception will he meet with in the house of the *stranger*?\* If alms are to be

\* Tertullian seems to lay a peculiar emphasis on the word "stranger,"—in *aliena domo*, in the house which, to a Christian, is a stranger's,—whereas the house of a Christian matron ought not to be a stranger's house to him.



bestowed, storehouse and cellar are shut fast." \* On the other hand, he counts it among the blessings of a marriage between Christians, that the wife is at liberty to visit the sick and relieve the needy, and needs not to be straitened or perplexed in the bestowal of her charities. †

And this active brotherly love of each church was not confined to its own immediate circle; it extended even to the wants of the church in distant lands. On urgent occasions of this kind the bishops appointed special collections. They appointed fasts, in order that the very poorest even of the flock, by denying themselves their daily food, might be able to contribute to the common need. ‡ When the churches of the provincial towns were too poor to meet any distress, they had recourse to the wealthiest church of the metropolis. For instance, in Numidia, certain Christians, men and women, having been carried away captive by their barbarian neighbours, and the Numidian churches being unable to contribute the sum required for their ransom, application was made to the more wealthy church of the great capital of North Africa. Cyprian, the bishop of Carthage at the time, very shortly raised, by collection, more than four thousand dollars, § and transmitted the whole to the Numidian bishops, with a letter full of the spirit of Christian brotherly affection. || "In afflictions of this sort," he writes to them, "who would not feel pained, who would not look on the distress of his brother as his own, when the apostle Paul tells us, 'if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it;' and again, 'Who is weak and I am not weak'?" Wherefore in the present case also we must regard the captivity of our brethren as our own, and the distress of those now in peril as our own, since we are bound together into one body. And not love alone, but religion, ought to urge and stimulate us to redeem the brethren who are members of ourselves. For the apostle Paul again, in another place, asks, 'Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?' We ought in such a case as this, if love alone is not enough to impel us to aid our brethren, to remember that it is

\* Ad uxorem. l. II. c. 4.

† L. c. c. 8: Libere æger visitatur, indigens sustentatur, eleemosynæ sine tormento.

‡ Tertullian, de jejuniis, c. 13: Episcopi universæ plebi mandare jejunia assolent,—industria stipium conferendarum.

§ Sestertia centum millia nummorum.

|| Ep. 60.

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the temple of God which is suffering captivity, and that it does not become us, by delay, and disregard of what is in truth our own distress, to suffer the temple of God to remain long in captivity. And since the same apostle tells us, that 'as many of you as are baptized have put on Christ,' we ought to see Christ in our captive brethren, and in them to redeem Him from captivity Who has redeemed us from death; so that He Who delivered us from the jaws of Satan, and Who now Himself dwells and abides in us, may be rescued from the hands of the barbarians; and that He may be ransomed for a sum of money, Who, by His blood and cross, has ransomed us, and Who has suffered this calamity to happen in order to try our faith—whether each one of us is ready to do for others what, if he himself were captured by barbarians, he would wish to have done for himself. For who that respects the claims of humanity and of mutual love, ought not, if he is a father, so to regard the matter as if his own children were among the captives, and, if a husband, as though his own wife were there, to the grief and shame of the marriage bond? We hope, indeed, that we may never again be visited with a like affliction, and that, by the mighty power of the Lord, our brethren may be saved from like calamities. But should any similar misfortune again happen to try the love and faith of our hearts, do not hesitate to inform us of it by letter, for be assured that, while it is the prayer of all the brethren here that nothing of the kind may again occur, they are yet ready, should it be necessary, cheerfully and abundantly to assist you."

That which gave to such works a truly Christian character was indeed nothing else than the temper, which here expresses itself, of Christian love simply following the impulse from within. This Christian character ceased to be present in its purity as soon as the act of charity had an outward end in view, when it was converted into a ground of merit before God as a means of expiating sin. And this corrupt element found entrance as soon as the Christian consciousness became in any way diverted from its central point, and ceased to refer to Christ as the sole ground for salvation. In proportion as this reference to Christ, which that resting (already noticed) on the mere outward manifestation of the church had a tendency to throw into the shade, was forgotten, the value rose



which men set on their own deeds, and on the merit of good works. This also must be considered as a reaction of that Jewish principle which had been depressed by the independent development of Christianity among the Gentiles, but which afterwards sprang up again. In the third century we observe both modes of contemplating acts of charity existing concurrently, and occasionally crossing each other; as, for example, in Cyprian's tract *de opere et eleemosynis*, written with a view of exciting the Christians, many of whom had grown cold in brotherly love, to the exercise of this virtue. To a father of a family, who, when invited to some charitable act, excuses himself on the plea of a large family, he says, "Seek for your sons another father than a frail and mortal one, even Him who is an almighty and everlasting Father of all spiritual children. Let Him be the guardian and provider for your children—let Him, with His divine majesty, be their protector against all the wrongs of the world. You, who are striving to secure for them an earthly rather than a heavenly inheritance, seeking to commend your sons to Satan rather than to Christ, commit a double sin; you neglect to obtain for your children the help of their heavenly Father, and you teach them to love their earthly inheritance more than Christ."

In times of public calamity the contrast was strikingly displayed in the great cities between the cowardly selfishness of the pagans and the self-sacrificing brotherly love of the Christians. Let us hear how the bishop Dionysius of Alexandria describes this contrast, as it was manifested in the conduct of the Christians and the heathens respectively during a contagion which raged in that great capital in the reign of the emperor Gallienus. "To the pagans this pestilence appeared a most frightful calamity that left them no hope; not so to us, but rather a special trial and exercise of our faith. Most of the brethren, in the fulness of their brotherly love, spared not themselves. Their only anxiety was for one another; and as they tended the sick without thinking of themselves, ministering readily to their wants for Christ's sake, they cheerfully gave up their own lives with them. Many died after having, by their care, restored others from the sickness. Some of the best among our brethren, priests, deacons, and distinguished laymen, thus ended their lives; so that such a death, being the fruit of great piety and strong faith,

seems scarcely inferior to martyrdom. Many who took the bodies of Christian brethren into their arms and to their bosoms, in order to compose their features and bury them with all due attention, afterwards followed them in death. But with the heathens it was quite different: when any showed the first symptoms of the disease, they drove from them away—they fled from their dearest friends. Many of them cast the half-dead into the streets, and left the dead unburied, making it their chief care to get out of the reach of the contagion, which however, in spite of every precaution, they could hardly escape.”\*

The Christians at Carthage, in like manner, distinguished themselves from the heathen world by their disinterested conduct during the pestilence which at a somewhat earlier period ravaged North Africa in the reign of Gallus. The pagans, out of fear, deserted their own sick and dying; the streets were full of dead bodies, which none dared to bury. Avarice alone overcame the fear of death; abandoned men ventured to make a profit of the misfortunes of their fellow-men. The pagans, meanwhile, instead of being brought by this calamity to a sense of their own guilt and depravity, accused the Christians, those enemies of the gods, as the cause of it.† But Cyprian exhorted his church to look upon the desolating scourge as a trial of their character.‡ “How necessary is it, my dearest brethren,” said he to them, “that this pestilence which is come, bringing with it death and destruction, should try the minds of men! It comes to show whether the healthy will take care of the sick; whether relations have a tender regard for each other; *whether masters will take care of their sick slaves.*” However, that the Christians should simply show the spirit of brotherly love towards each other was not enough to satisfy a bishop who took the Great Shepherd for his example. Calling his church together, he addressed them thus:—“If we do good only to our own, we do no more than the heathens and the publicans. But if we are the children of God, who makes his sun to rise and sends his rain on the just and on the unjust, who scatters his gifts and blessings not barely on his own, but even on those whose thoughts are far from him, we must show it by our actions, by striving to be perfect even as

\* Euseb. l. VII. c. 22.

† Cyprian, ad Demetrianum.

‡ Lib. de mortalitate.



our Father in heaven is perfect, blessing those that curse us, and by doing good to them that despitefully use us." Encouraged by his fatherly words, the members of the church quickly divided the work among them. The rich gave of their substance, the poor contributed their bodily labour, and in a short time the bodies that filled the streets were buried, and the city delivered from the danger of a universal infection.

There were opposite tendencies to sin which Christianity taught men to avoid, and between which the development of the Christian life had to steer. In these times of despotism, a servile spirit that gave to the creature the honour which is due to God alone, and a slavish obedience that sprang only from fear, were frequently united with a contempt for the laws of the state wherever they came in conflict with selfish interest and where the restraint of fear did not exist. But Christianity, by the *positive* spirit which it gave rise to, secured men against both these errors. It taught them to render an obedience that had its root in the love of God and pointed ultimately to *Him*,—therefore a free obedience, as far removed from a slavish fear of man on the one hand, as from lawless self-will on the other. The same spirit of Christianity which taught man to obey for God's sake, taught also that God should be obeyed rather than man, and that every consideration, even of property and life itself, should be disregarded in all cases where human power demanded an obedience contrary to the laws and ordinances of God. In such cases the Christians displayed that true spirit of freedom, against which despotic power could avail nothing. We have already had occasion, in the first section of this history, to notice the effects of the Christian spirit in both respects. In this sense Justin Martyr says,\* "Tribute and custom we above all others are everywhere ready to pay to your appointed officers, as our Master has taught us (St. Matthew xxii. 21). Therefore we pray to God alone; but you we cheerfully serve in all other things, since we acknowledge you as rulers of men." Tertullian could boldly appeal to the fact that what the state lost in its revenue from the temples by the spread of Christianity was made up by what it gained in the way of tribute and customs, through the honesty of the Christians as contrasted with the frauds so commonly resorted

\* Apolog. II.

to in paying them.\* To those words of Christ (St. Matthew xxii. 21), which were ever on the lips and in the hearts of Christians as a maxim of daily life, he gives the following interpretation, in opposition to those who took them, as he supposed, in too wide and indefinite a sense:—"Let the image of Cæsar, which is on the coin, be rendered to Cæsar; and the image of God, which is in man, be given to God: give, therefore, thy money to Cæsar, but thyself to God; for what will remain for God if all belongs to Cæsar?"†

The general principles on which men were bound to act in such a case could be easily laid down and easily deduced from the nature of Christianity, and on these general principles all Christians were agreed. But the application of these principles to particular cases was far more difficult; as, for instance, in determining in every case where the line was to be drawn between what belonged to Cæsar and what belonged to God—between what might be considered a matter of indifference in a religious point of view, and what not. Heathenism was, in fact, so closely mixed up with the whole civil and social life, that it was not always easy to separate and distinguish the merely civil or social from the religious element. In very much that had really sprung from a religious source, its connection, however, with religion had long been forgotten, and, remembered only by a few learned antiquarians, had long faded away from the popular consciousness.‡ The question therefore arose, whether, like others, such customs should be considered as in themselves indifferent, and whether in such matters men might follow the mere social or civil usages, or whether they should set aside all other considerations on account of the original connection of such customs with heathenism.

Again, Christianity, while from its nature it must pass sentence upon all ungodliness, recognises, on the other hand, whatever is pure in human relations and institutions;

\* Apolog. c. 42: Si ineatur (ratio), quantum vectigalibus pereat fraude et mendacio vestrarum professionum.

† De idololatria, c. 15.

‡ See, for example, what Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria have drawn from the stores of their own learning and the works of other literary men concerning the religious significance and allusion of the custom of crowning,—things which assuredly would not easily occur to men in common life.



instead of rejecting them it would sanctify and ennoble them. But then the question might arise in particular cases, what *is* pure in human things, and therefore fit to be received into union with Christianity; and what, having sprung originally out of the corruption of human nature, and being in its essence ungodly, must therefore be rejected? Now, as Christianity appeared as the *new leaven* in the *old* world, and was destined to produce a *new creation* in an old one that had grown up out of a very different principle of life, the question might the more easily occur, which of its existing elements needed only to be transformed and ennobled, and which must be wholly destroyed? There might be much which, through the turn and direction they had taken in a corrupt world, might seem utterly at variance with the essence of Christianity; but which, by means of a different direction and use, might readily admit of being brought into harmony with it. Now some persons might condemn, together with the abuse, the good use even of these things; while others, from a consideration of their good use, might be led to approve the abuse of them.

Finally, many customs may have existed which could never have found a place in a state of things that had grown out of Christianity—which were altogether alien to pure Christianity—but which, nevertheless, under the influence of the Christian spirit, might be so modified and applied as to be divested of whatever was incompatible with the essence of the Christian faith. That religion which nowhere produced violent and convulsive changes from without, but worked its reforms by changing in the first place the inward sentiments,—whose peculiar character it was to operate positively rather than negatively—to displace and destroy no faster than it substituted something better,—might, by virtue of this its law of action, suffer many of the existing customs to remain just as they were, in their old defective forms, in order to infuse into them a new spirit, which might throw them off, and create *all* things new.

Hence, then, notwithstanding this agreement as to general principles, disputes might well arise as to their application in particular cases, according as men were led by their different positions and tendencies of mind to take a different view of the circumstances—disputes similar to those which subsequently have arisen at various periods in missions among foreign tribes,

the organization of new churches, and the determination of matters not essential (*ἀδιάφορα*). Men were liable to err in such cases on both sides, either by too lax an accommodation or by too stern an opposition. Undue predominance might be allowed to the aggressive or to the assimilative power of Christianity, which should both be intimately united to secure the healthy development of life. The few excepted who had already advanced farther in the true liberty of the gospel, uniting deep Christian earnestness with the prudence and clearness of science, the sincerer Christians were generally more inclined to the extreme of stern reprobation than to that of a false accommodation. Rather than run the risk of retaining the corruption of heathenism which had attached to it, they preferred to cast aside much which as heathens they had once used in the service of sin and falsehood, even though it was capable of another use. They willingly bid farewell to everything which in their minds was associated with sin or with pagan rites. They chose rather to go to extremes than to forfeit a tittle of that Christianity which constituted their jewel, the pearl for which they were willing to sell all they had; as in general it is more natural for men, in the first ardour of conversion, the first glow of love, whenever it is genuine, to go too far in opposing the world than in yielding to it. The church at large has to pass through the same periods of development as the individual Christian. Accordingly, in the development of the Christian life, the extreme aggressive element must naturally first predominate.

As regards the controversy between the two parties, the one appealed to the rule that men are bound to render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's,—that, in matters pertaining to civil order, obedience is due to the existing laws,—that offence is not to be given unnecessarily to the heathens, nor occasion afforded them to blaspheme the name of God,—but that it is necessary to become all things to all men, in order to win all to the gospel. The other party could not deny that these were scriptural principles; but, they said, while we are to consider all outward, earthly possessions as belonging to the emperor, our hearts and our lives at any rate must belong wholly to God. That which is the emperor's ought never to be put in competition with that which is God's. If the injunction that we should give the heathen no occasion to



blaspheme the Christian name, must be so unconditionally understood, it would be necessary to put aside Christianity altogether. Let them calumniate us for ever, provided only we give them no occasion for so doing by our unchristian conduct, and provided they accuse *us* only for what is essentially Christian. We ought indeed, in every proper sense, to become all things to all men; but yet never so as to become worldly to worldly men; for it is also said, "If I yet please men, I am not the servant of Christ."\* We see plainly that each of these two parties were right in the principles they maintained; the only question was to determine where these principles found their right application.

While one party believed that they ought to avoid everything which might excite attention among the heathens, and consequently provoke them to resort to persecuting measures, the other condemned all such prudence and reserve, as proof of a temper that was either ashamed or afraid of public confession. Clement, of Alexandria, speaks against those who, whenever they met in the street, publicly saluted each other with the brotherly kiss, and thus everywhere drew attention to themselves as Christians. He calls it a foolish provocation of the pagans.† He charges them with falsely wearing for ostentation that Christian love which is an inward sentiment, and with being unable to walk circumspectly, redeeming the time, in which, however, it must be admitted, he makes a wrong application of St. Paul's words, in the fifth chapter to the Ephesians.‡

Whoever followed any trade which was contrary to the general and recognised principles of Christianity was not admitted to baptism till he had pledged himself to relinquish it.§ He must either commence some new occupation in order to earn a

\* Tertullian, de idololatria.

† Strom. III. f. 257: Οἱ κατὰ τὰς ὁδοὺς τῶν ἀγαπήτων ἀσπασμοὶ παρρησίας ἀνοήτου γέροντες, καταφανῶν τοῖς ἐκτὸς εἶναι βουλομένων οὐδὲ ἐλαχίστης μετέχουσι χάριτος.

‡ That they should μυστικῶς φιλοφρονεῖσθαι ἑννοῶν, ἐξαγοραζομένους τὸν καιρόν.

§ Apostol. Constit. I. VIII. c. 31. Also, Council of Elvira, can. 62: Si auriga et pantomimus credere voluerint, placuit, ut prius actibus suis renuntient, et tunc demum suscipiantur, ita ut ulterius ad ea non revertantur. Qui si facere contra interdictum tentaverint, projiciantur ab ecclesia.

subsistence; or if unable to do this, he was admitted upon the list of the poor maintained by the church. Now among these occupations were all that were in any way connected with idolatry, or which were calculated to promote it; those, for instance, of the artists and workmen who employed themselves in making or adorning images of the gods. There were doubtless many who, wishing to pursue these trades for a livelihood, excused themselves on the ground that they were far from worshipping the idols, that they did not consider them as objects of religion, but simply as objects of art; though it assuredly argued a peculiar coldness of religious feeling thus to distinguish in these times what belonged to art and what belonged to religion. Against such excuses Tertullian exclaimed with pious warmth,\*—"Assuredly you *are* a worshipper of idols, when you make them to be worshipped. It is true you bring to them no victim of other things; but you make to them the offering of your mind; your sweat is their drink-offering,—the torch of your cunning do you light up for them." In the same class of employments were reckoned the various kind of astrology, the so-called mathematici, and of magic, at that time so lucrative.

A remarkable proof of the degree in which humane feelings and interests among the Romans were repressed by the influence of exclusive political considerations is furnished by the cruel spectacles of the ludi gladiatorii. But the feeling of universal philanthropy which Christianity roused into life and action must have struggled, from the first, against this cruel custom, justified and sanctioned as it was by the established laws and by the prevalent habits of thinking among the Romans. Whoever frequented the gladiatorial shows and the combats of wild beasts was, by the general law of the church, excluded from the communion. Irenæus speaks of it with horror as the utter renunciation of the Christian character, when certain individuals (belonging to the wildly fanatical and antinomian sects of the Gnostics) did not even refrain from participating in those bloody shows, alike hateful to God and to men.† Cyprian, describing the joy of a Christian who, having just escaped from the pollutions of heathenism, looks

\* De idololatria, c. 6.

† Irenæus, l. I. c. 6: 'Ὡς μηδὲ τῆς παρὰ θεῷ καὶ ἀνθρώποις μεμισσημένης τῆς τῶν διειρημάχων καὶ μονομαχιῶν ἀνδροφόνου θεῶς ἀπέχεσθαι ἐνός αὐτῶν.



back upon it from his new position, says,\* “If you cast your eye on the cities, you behold an assembly of men more painful than any solitude. A combat of gladiators is in preparation, that blood may satiate the lust of cruel eyes. A man is killed for the amusement of his fellow-men; murder is turned into an art, and crime not only perpetrated, but taught.” Tertulian says to those pagans who defended the games of the gladiators,† and who probably made it one of their arguments that criminals condemned to death by the laws were most frequently employed as the actors in them, “It is well that criminals should be punished; as who but a criminal can deny? And yet the innocent can never find pleasure in the punishment of his neighbour; it behoves him rather to grieve when a man, his fellow, has become so guilty as to subject himself to so cruel a death. But who is ready to vouch that it is always the guilty who are thrown to the wild beasts, or condemned to other kinds of death; that innocence does not sometimes meet with the same fate, through revenge on the part of the judge, through the weakness of the advocate, or the force of torture? But even the *gladiators*, as you must at least allow, come not to the combat as criminals, but as an offering to the public pleasure. And even though we speak only of *those who are condemned* to the gladiatorial combats, what is the wisdom of this—that punishment, whose object *ought to be* to reform those who are guilty of minor offences, should tend in fact to make them murderers?”

But it was not the participation in these cruel amusements that alone appeared to the Christians incompatible with their calling. A similar condemnation was passed on all the public exhibitions of that period; on the pantomimes, the drama, the chariot and foot-races, and the various amusements of the circus and the theatre. Such was the prevailing and passionate fondness of the Romans at that time for theatrical entertainments, that a man was at once looked upon as a Christian simply if he absented himself wholly from the theatre.‡ Theatrical spectacles were considered as an appendage of idolatry, by virtue of their origin from heathen rites, and of their connection with many of the pagan festivals. Among the pomps of

\* Ep. ad. Donat.

† De spectaculis, c. 19.

‡ De spectaculis, c. 24: Hinc vel maxime ethnici intelligunt factum Christianum, de repudio spectaculorum.

idolatry or devil-worship, (πομπή διαβόλου,) which the Christians, when enrolled in the ranks of Christian soldiers, were obliged to renounce by their baptismal vow, (the sacramentum militiae Christi,) *these spectacles* were particularly included. Moreover, much occurred in them which was revolting to the moral feelings and decency of Christians; and even if this were not the case, still the spending whole hours on mere nonsense—the unholy spirit which reigned in these assemblies—the wild uproar of the congregated multitude, seemed unsuited to the holy seriousness of the Christian's priestly character. The Christians did, in truth, consider themselves as priests, consecrated for their whole life to God—as temples of the Holy Spirit; whatever, therefore, was alien to that Spirit, for whose indwelling they were to keep their hearts always ready, must be avoided. “God has commanded,” says Tertullian,\* “that the Holy Spirit, as a Spirit essentially tender and gentle, should be tended with tranquillity and gentleness, with quiet and peace—that it should not be disturbed by passion, fury, anger, and emotions of violent grief. How can such a spirit consist with the spectacles? For no spectacle passes off without some violent agitation of the passions. No one that goes to the play thinks of anything else than to see and to be seen. Is it possible, while listening to the declamation of the actor, to think on the sentence of a prophet, or, in the midst of the song of an eunuch, meditate on a psalm? If every kind of immodesty is abominable, how can we allow ourselves to listen to that which, inasmuch as we know that every idle and unprofitable word is condemned by our Lord, we dare not speak?” Matt. xii. 36. Ephes. iv. 29, v. 4.

To Tertullian, who, in truth, was inclined to look upon all art as a lie, which counterfeited the original nature which God created, the whole system of spectacles appeared a mere art of dissimulation and falsehood. “The Creator of truth,” he said,† “loves nothing that is false,—all fiction is, to him, falsification. He who condemns all hypocrisy will never pronounce him good who counterfeits voice, sex, age, love, anger, sighs, and tears.”

Weak minds, who allowed themselves to be carried away by the prevailing custom, though at issue with their Christian feelings, into visiting such scenes, might be seriously injured

\* De spectaculis, c. 15.

† L. c.



by impressions thus received, and, for a long while, robbed of their peace. We find examples of a distempered state of mind, similar to that of demoniacal possession, being brought on by such inward distraction.\* Others, after being prevailed upon, in spite of conscience, by the love of pleasure, to indulge once or twice in these amusements, contracted a new taste for them, and, by a passionate fondness for the theatre, were, in the end, gradually drawn back again to heathenism.†

The heathens and the more lightminded among the Christians were in the habit of pressing the more seriously disposed with arguments like the following: Why should they withdraw from these public amusements? Such *outward* pleasures, addressed to the eye and ear, may be quite consistent with religion in the heart. God is not wronged by man's pleasure, which is no sin when enjoyed in its proper time and place, without detracting from the fear and the reverence of God in the heart.‡ Thus Celsus, when he invites the Christians to join in the public festivals, says to them, "God is the common God of all,—he is good, in need of nothing, and a stranger to all jealousy. What then should hinder men, however closely devoted to him, from participating in the public festivals?"§ To such arguments Tertullian replied that the very point for us to show is, how these amusements cannot possibly agree with true religion and with true obedience which is due to the true God.

Others again, who, infected with a passion for these trifles, sought for reasons by which to silence their conscience as Christians, argued that in these spectacles nothing was employed but God's gifts, which he had bestowed on men that they

\* For examples see Tertullian *de spectaculis*, c. 26: A woman who visited the theatre came home from there in the sad condition of a person demoniacally possessed. The evil spirit, having been adjured to tell why it had taken possession of the soul of a Christian, said, or the patient, who believed that she spoke in the name of the demon:—"In this I did perfectly right, for I found her where my own kingdom is." Another, having visited a theatre, had the night following a frightful vision, and, in consequence probably of the alarm into which she was thrown, died five days afterwards.

† L. c. c. 26: Quot documenta de his, qui, cum diabolo apud spectaculo communicando, a Domino exciderunt!

‡ L. c. c. 1.

§ Orig. c. Cels. l. VIII. c. 21: 'Ο γὰρ μὴν Θεὸς ἅπασιν κοινὸς ἀγαθός τε καὶ ἀπροσδεής, καὶ ἔξω φθόνου. Τί οὖν κωλύει τοὺς μάλιστα καθωσιωμένους αὐτῷ καὶ τῶν δημοσιῶν ἑορτῶν μεταλαμβάνειν;

might enjoy them. No passage of scripture, too, they observed, could be adduced where the shows were expressly forbidden. As regarded the chariot race, there could assuredly be nothing sinful in riding in a chariot, for Elijah rode in a chariot to heaven. As to the theatre, music and dancing could not be forbidden, for we read in scripture of choirs, stringed instruments, cymbals, trumpets and shawms, harp and psaltery; we read of David dancing and playing before the ark, 1 Chron. xvi. 29; and the apostle St. Paul, in exhorting Christians, borrows images from the stadium and the circus.\* Eph. vi. 13; 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8; Philip. iii. 14. At this sophistry Tertullian exclaims, "How acute in reasoning does human ignorance imagine itself, especially when it is afraid of losing some of the pleasures and amusements of the world!" In answer to the first argument he says, "To be sure, all things are the gift of God; but the question is, for what end has God given them, and how may they be so used as to answer their true end? What is their original creation, and what the abuse of them by sin? for there is a wide difference between original purity of nature and its corruption—between its Creator and its perverter." To the second he replies, "Though scripture contains no express verbal prohibition of theatrical exhibitions, yet it contains the general principles from which this prohibition follows naturally. All that is there said generally against the lusts of the flesh and of the eye must be applied also to this particular kind of lust. If we can maintain that wrath, cruelty, and rudeness are permitted in scripture, we are at liberty to visit the amphitheatre. If we are such as we call ourselves, then let us, if we can, take delight in the shedding of human blood." Against such as wrested the scriptures in the manner above described, the author of the treatise '*De Spectaculis*,' among the works of Cyprian, uses the following language: "I can justly say it were better that such persons knew nothing of the scriptures than to read them thus; for the language and examples which ought to lead men to the virtues of the gospel are by them perverted to the defence of vice; for these similes were employed for the purpose of inflaming our zeal in things profitable, while the heathens display so much eagerness on trifles. From the general rules laid down in scripture reason itself can deduce those conclusions which are not

\* The tract *de spectaculis*, among the works of Cyprian.



expressly set forth.\* Only let each commune with his own heart,—let him take counsel only with that character which, as a Christian, he ought to bear, and then he will never do anything unbecoming the Christian, for conscience, while it depends on its own judgment and not on another's, will always prevail."†

Tertullian invites the Christians to compare with those empty pleasures of the heathen world, the true, spiritual pleasures which had become theirs through faith.‡ "Tell me, pray, have *we* any other desire than that which was the desire of the apostle, to depart, viz., from the world, and be with the Lord? Wherever thy wishes are, there are thy pleasures. But why art thou so unthankful, that thou art not satisfied with, and dost not acknowledge, the many and great pleasures which even now are bestowed on thee by the Lord? For what is there more joyous than reconciliation with God, thy Father and thy Lord—than the revelation of truth, the knowledge of error, the forgiveness of so many past sins? What greater pleasure than the contempt of such pleasures, and of the whole world—than true freedom, a pure conscience, a blameless life, and fearlessness of death—than to be able to tread under foot the gods of the heathen world, and to cast out evil spirits, to heal diseases, and to pray for revelations? These are the pleasures, these the entertainments of the Christian; holy, everlasting, which cannot be bought with money. And what must those be which eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, and which it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive?" In like manner, the author of the above-cited treatise among the works of Cyprian remarks, "He can never look with wonder on the works of man, who has come to know himself as a child of God. He casts himself down from the pinnacle of his true nobility who ever looks with wonder upon anything else than the Lord. Let the faithful Christian give all diligence to the study of the holy scriptures, and there he will find worthy spectacles of faith,—shows which even he who has lost his eyesight may enjoy."

If merely to be a spectator of these theatrical entertain-

\* Ratio docet, quæ scriptura contineat.

† Unusquisque cum persona professionis suæ loquatur et nihil unquam indecorum geret. Plus enim ponderis habebit conscientia, quæ nulli se alteri debet, nisi sibi.

‡ De spectaculis, c. 29.

ments was considered wrong by the Christians, much more would the profession of an actor be condemned. In the time of Cyprian it happened that an actor became a Christian, and then, for the sake of gaining a livelihood, instructed boys in the art which he formerly practised. Cyprian was consulted whether such a person could be suffered to remain in the communion of the church, and he gave his opinion strongly against it. Since Cyprian's position as a bishop naturally led him to appeal to the Old Testament as much as to the New for rules of life, he referred first of all to Deut. xxii. 5. If a man, he said, is forbidden even to put on the garment of a woman, and a curse is pronounced on any one who does so, "how much more criminal must it appear to form the *man*, by an immodest art, to effeminate and unseemly gestures, to falsify the workmanship of God by the arts of the devil!" "If such a one," he adds, "pleads poverty in excuse, he, together with the rest who are maintained by the church, can have his necessities supplied, provided he can content himself with a homelier but more innocent fare. He must not, however, suppose that he is to be paid for leaving off his sin, since he does this, not for our sake, but for his own. If the church where he lives is too poor to support him, let him come to Carthage: here he may receive whatever is necessary for food and raiment, provided only he teach not what is pernicious to those even who are without the pale of the church, but learn himself, within the church, what tends to salvation."\*

Among those social relations which were foreign to the nature of Christianity, and which Christianity found existing at the time of its first propagation, was that of *slavery*. By the alienation of man from God, the original unity of his race was disturbed. Mankind, destined to unity, had been split into a multitude of nations, each striving to make itself felt as the whole, and developing itself in opposition to all the others. Thus the consciousness of a common human dignity was lost, and it became possible for man to be placed in that relation to his fellow in which nature alone should stand to humanity, and natural things to the individual.† A relation so unnatural

\* Ep. 61, ad Euchrat.

† So says he who has most distinctly expressed the ethical and political notions of the ancient world, Aristotle, *Eth. Nicomach.* i. IX. c. 13. The relation between master and slave is like that between the



could only be justified by assuming that the differences among nations, which originated in sin subsequently to the first formation of man, and which is the source of the disparity of intellectual and moral powers, was something original. It was impossible, therefore, any longer to recognise the fundamental identity of human nature, and one class of beings consequently was believed to be destined by nature itself to be the tools and instruments of the other, and devoid of any will of their own. Such a relation seems almost a necessary result of the position held by antiquity, where state and nation constituted the absolute form within which the supreme good was to be realized, and it serves to explain the strange fact that the nation which was most zealous for civil liberty still employed thousands as slaves.\* And though their situation was often rendered more tolerable by the influence of manners and the purer sentiments of humanity, which, breaking through unnatural restraints, often introduced a heartier fellowship between master and slave,† nevertheless the contradiction between this relation on the whole and man's essential dignity could not thus be set aside. In general it was still the prevailing habit to look upon slaves, not as men gifted with the same rights as all others, but as things. In a judicial process slaves, who, it was acknowledged, were not implicated in any guilt, might still be put to the rack for the purpose of extorting confessions from them. If a master was murdered by one of his slaves the cruel rigour of the Roman laws required the immolation of all the slaves, male and female, who were in the house when the crime was committed; and this, too, whatever might be their number, and however free from suspicion.‡

artisan and his tools, the soul and the body, the man and his horse or ox: *ὁ δοῦλος ἔμψυχον ὄργανον, τὸ δ' ὄργανον ἄψυχος δοῦλος*. In this relation, to speak of a *δικαίον*, a *φιλία*, would be out of place.

\* See above, p. 63, the way in which Aristotle seeks to justify this relation, to show that it is one aimed at by Nature herself.

† Even Aristotle, *Eth. Nicomach.* l. IX. c. 13, makes this distinction in reference to the relation between master and slave: *ἡ μὲν οὖν δοῦλος, οὐκ ἔστι φιλία πρὸς αὐτὸν, ἥ δ' ἀνδρωπος, δοκεῖ γὰρ εἶναι τι δίκαιον παντὶ ἀνθρώπῳ πρὸς πάντα τὸν δυνάμενον κοινωνῆσαι νόμον καὶ συνθήκης καὶ φιλίας δὴ καὶ ὅσον ἀνδρωπος*.

‡ Tacitus, *Annal.* l. XIV. c. 42 et seq., relates a case of this sort, when the blood of so many innocent persons of every age and sex was to be shed, that the compassion of the people was roused, and it was necessary to use force to prevent an insurrection.

But Christianity effected a change in the convictions of men, from which a dissolution of this whole relation, though it could not be immediately accomplished, yet, by virtue of the consequences resulting from that change, was sure eventually to take place. This effect Christianity produced, first of all, by the facts to which it was a witness, and next by the ideas which, by means of these facts, it set in circulation. By Christ, the Saviour for all mankind, the differences among men resulting from sin were reconciled; by Him the original unity of the human race was restored. These facts must now operate in transforming the life of mankind. Masters as well as servants were obliged to acknowledge themselves the servants of sin, and must alike receive, as the free gift of God's grace, their deliverance from this common bondage—the *true, the highest freedom*. Servants and masters, if they had become believers, were brought together under the same bond of an heavenly union, destined for immortality: they became brethren in Christ in whom there is neither bond nor free, members of one body, baptised into one spirit, heirs of the same heavenly inheritance. Servants were often the teachers of their masters in the gospel, after having, first of all, in their lives and actions, exhibited before them the loftiness of a divine life, which must be shown forth even under the most painful of relations, and shine forth the more brightly by the contrast.\* Masters saw in their servants no longer their slaves, but their beloved brethren; together masters and slaves prayed and sang; they could sit at each other's side at the feast of love, and partake together of the Supper of the Lord. Thus the spirit and the effects of Christianity necessarily diffused widely ideas and feelings which were directly opposed to this relation of society, however consonant with previous habits of thinking. Christianity could not fail to give birth to the wish that every man might be placed in such a situation as would least hinder the free and independent use of his

\* The example of Onesimus often recurred. Tertullian refers to the case of a master, who, after having for a long time patiently endured the vices of a slave, observed that he had suddenly reformed, but upon being told that *Christianity* had wrought this change in him, immediately, out of hatred to this religion, had him sent off to the house of correction. Apologet. c. 3: *Servum jam fidelem dominus olim mitis ab oculis relegavit.*



intellectual and moral powers, according to the will of God. Accordingly, the Apostle St. Paul, speaking to the servant, says (1 Cor. vii. 21), "If thou mayst be made free, use it rather." Yet Christianity nowhere began with outward revolutions and changes, for where they have not been prepared from within, and are not based upon inward conviction, they invariably fail of their salutary ends. The new creation to which Christianity gave birth was in all respects an inward one, from which the outward effects, in their full compass and extent, gradually, and therefore more surely and healthfully, unfolded themselves. It gave to the slave, first of all, the true internal freedom, without which the external and earthly freedom is a mere semblance, for wherever the former exists it can be cramped by no earthly bond or earthly yoke. The Apostle Paul says, "He that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman." Tertullian, wishing to show how far exalted this heavenly freedom is above the earthly, observes \*—"In the world they who have received their freedom are crowned. But thou art ransomed already by Christ, and indeed bought with a costly price. How can the world give freedom to him who is already the servant of another? In the world all is mere semblance, and nothing truth. For even then, being redeemed by Christ, thou becamest free in relation to man; and now thou art a servant of Christ although made free of man. If thou deemest *that* the true freedom which the world gives, thou dost, for that very reason, become once more the servant of man, and hast lost the freedom which Christ bestows because thou thinkest it bondage." Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, thus writes to Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna: †—"Be not proud towards servants and maids; but neither must they exalt themselves, but they must, for the honour of God, serve the more zealously, in order that they may receive from Him the higher freedom. Let them not be anxious to be redeemed at the expense of the church, lest they be found slaves of their own lusts." ‡ One of the imperial slaves, named Euelpistus, who was arraigned at the same time with Justin Martyr and other Christians,

\* De corona militis, c. 13.

† Cap. 4.

‡ The genuineness of the letter is here of no importance. At all events, we find a witness of the Christian mode of thinking in the first century.

expressed himself thus: "I too am a Christian; I have obtained my freedom from Christ; and through the grace of Christ I am a partaker of the same hope." \*

On the question whether a Christian might hold any civil or military office, especially the latter, opinions were divided. As the heathen religion of the state was so closely interwoven with all political and social arrangements, every holder of such offices might easily be placed in situations where it would be almost impossible to avoid joining in the pagan ceremonies. On this point all Christians were unanimous; no necessity whatever could excuse that. Tertullian's remark on this subject was assuredly spoken from the soul of every believer—"To be a Christian is not one thing here and another there. There is one Gospel and one Jesus, who will deny all them that deny him, and confess all them that confess God. With him the believing citizen is a soldier of the Lord, and the soldier owes the same duties to the faith as the citizen." †

But the *question*, whether such an office, considered in itself, was compatible with the Christian calling, was a distinct one, which was answered by one party in the affirmative, by another in the negative. Rightly to understand these opinions we must take into our view the circumstances in which the church found itself placed. The prevailing idea of the Christian life was, to follow in humility, in self-denial, and the renunciation of all earthly good, a Redeemer who had outwardly manifested Himself in poverty and a low estate—had veiled His glory under the form of a servant. The Christian had his glory with his Saviour in heaven; as to his earthly appearance, whatever was lowly, whatever was void of pomp or show, most like the life of his Saviour, whom he loved to follow in every particular, was best fitted for him. He despised the power and the glory of this world, above which he felt himself exalted by the consciousness of sharing the power and glory of a very different world. It is true, this renunciation of earthly

\* Acta Mart. Justini.

† De corona militis, c. 11: Apud hunc tam miles est paganus fidelis, quam paganus est miles infidelis. In translating this passage I have gone on the supposition that fidelis is the true reading,—a correction warranted perhaps by what Tertullian has just before said respecting the fides pagana. Still even the common reading gives a good sense: The unbelieving soldier, who violates the duties of Christian fidelity, is to him as a pagan.



things consisted essentially in the sentiments of the heart; and these might remain unchanged under any change of external circumstances. The *outward* possession of earthly property, of earthly splendour, such as the special relations of life might require, the exercise of earthly power and authority in an earthly calling, were not necessarily excluded thereby: all this might be, and indeed was to be, sanctified by Christianity. But the first ardour of conversion did not allow those with whom the living feeling was the ruling influence solely to distinguish what pertained simply to the idea and disposition in itself, and what to the manifestation of it and the outward conduct. They were inclined to take the figure—of following their Lord, who had appeared in the form of a servant—in an outward sense, and to refer it to an identity with the very outward circumstances in which he had lived. Thus wealth, worldly power and glory—which, moreover, they so often saw arrayed against the kingdom of God—seemed thereby to be forbidden them, and the first fervour of their zeal led them to disdain all this as alien to their calling.\* In this spirit Tertullian says,† “Thou, as a Christian, art bound to follow thy Lord’s example. He, the Lord, went about in humility and loneliness, a wanderer without a home, for He Himself says, ‘The Son of Man hath not where to lay his head;’ in poor apparel, or He would not have said, ‘Behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings’ houses;’ without beauty or comeliness of appearance, as Isaiah had foretold (chap. liii.). If He exercised His right of authority over none, not even His own disciples, for whom He performed the most menial service; if, finally, conscious of His *own* royal dignity, He rejected the honours of a king, He gave His disciples a perfect example of avoiding all that is high and glorious in earthly power and dignity. For who was better entitled to use these things than the Son of God? What fasces, and how many of them, must have gone before *Him*; what purple have hung from His shoulders; what gold gleamed on His brow—had He not judged that the glory of this world was foreign both to Himself and to His! What he rejected, therefore, He condemned.”‡

\* Hence the pagan in Minucius Felix, c. 8, describes the Christians as men who, themselves half naked, despise honour and the purple, honores et purpuras despiciunt, ipsi seminudi.

† De idololatria, c. 18.

‡ Tertullian, one of the sternest representatives, it must be allowed,

Many Christians, again, with a conscientiousness which in itself was worthy of all respect, thought themselves bound to take passages like Matth. v. 39, in the literal sense. Generally a tone of mind prevailed which, by leading men to take such words as positive commands, naturally hindered them from rightly understanding them according to their spirit,—as the expression of that which is rooted in the essence of Christianity, and of that new life and law of living which by an inward necessity proceeds from Christ. That which ought to have been understood as referring immediately to the disposition alone, was referred to the outwardness of the act. It revolted against their Christian feelings to allow themselves to be employed as instruments of pain to others, to assist in the execution of laws which, in all cases, were dictated and animated by the spirit of rigid justice alone, without any admixture of mercy or love.\*

In general, the Christians were accustomed by the circumstances of the time to consider the state as a hostile power and antagonist of the church; and it was as yet quite remote from their ideas to expect that Christianity could and would appropriate to itself, also, the state.† The Christians stood aloof and distinct from the state, as a priestly and spiritual race; and the *only* way in which it seemed possible that Christianity could exert an influence on civil life was (which it must be allowed was the purest way) by labouring continually to diffuse a holier temper in the whole body of the citizens.

of this mode of thinking, and in whom it appears, like everything else that had seized and animated him, to have been carried to the utmost extreme, says (*Gloriam seculi*), *quam damnavit, in pompa diaboli deputavit*.

\* Tertullian, where he treats this matter, distinguishes, in the first place, those cases in which a Christian could not, *under any circumstances*, be allowed to hold a civil office: *Jam vero quæ sunt potestatis, neque judicet de capite alicujus vel pudore, feras enim de pecunia, neminem vinciat, neminem recludat aut torqueat, si hæc credibile est fieri posse*. The council of Elvira, can. 56, decreed that magistrates, during the years in which, as *duumvirs*, they had to decide on matters of life and death, ought not to attend church.

† So far from Tertullian's mind was the thought that the emperors themselves would at some future day be Christians, that in *Apologet.* c. 21, he says, *Sed et Cæsares credidissent super Christo, si aut Cæsares non essent sæculo necessarii aut si Christiani potuissent esse Cæsares* *Comp. above, p. 237.*



When Celsus called on the Christians to take up arms like other subjects in defence of the emperor, and fight in his armies, Origen replied, "We do render the emperors a divine assistance, when we put on a divine armour, wherein we follow the command of the apostle, 1 Tim. ii. 1. The more pious a man is, the better able is he to render the emperor a more effectual service than his ordinary soldiers do. Again we might thus reply to the heathen: Your priests keep their hands pure, that they may be able to offer the customary offerings to the gods with hands unstained by blood. In war you do not compel them to take the field. As priests of God it is the duty of Christians to fight, by prayer to Him, for those who are waging a just war and for the lawful emperor, that all opposition to him who does right may be put down. The Christians render greater service to their country than other men, by forming the hearts of the citizens, and teaching them piety towards that God on Whom the well-being of the state depends, and Who will receive all such as in the meanest of cities lead a good life, into a city which is heavenly and divine."\* When Celsus called upon the Christians to undertake the administration of civil affairs in their own countries, Origen replies, "But we know that, in whatever city we are, we have another country, which is founded on the word of God; and we require those who by their gift of teaching and by their pious life are fitted for the task to undertake the administration of the offices of the church."

Those, on the other hand, who maintained that it was allowable for Christians to hold civil and military offices, appealed to examples from the Old Testament. But their

\* In vindication of the translation here given of the passage which closes the eighth letter against Celsus, I must add a few critical remarks. In Origen's words, the reading *εἰς τὸν πολιέα Θεόν* seems to me to be the correct one,—the reading *εἰς τὸν τῶν ὅλων Θεόν* false. It admits of being easily explained how the predicate, which was an unusual one in the Christian sense, might be altered into the phraseology common among the Christians: but not so easily how the latter could be changed into the former. But that Origen himself, speaking from his own Christian position, should apply the term *πολιεύς* to God, cannot appear singular, as the comparison with the *Ζεὺς πολιεύς* was hovering before his mind. The word *πόλις*, which occurs so often in this sentence, favours the supposition of such an allusion. If this reading is adopted, the allusion makes it probable that *ἀναλαμβάνοντες* should be read instead of *ἀναλαμβάνοντα*.

opponents in reply insisted on the difference between the two stages of religious development. Tertullian maintains against such, that the higher stage of Christianity makes higher requisitions.\* Again, the defenders of the military profession appealed to the instance of John the Baptist, as not bidding the soldiers that came to him to relinquish their calling, but merely as prescribing to them certain rules for pursuing it in a manner well pleasing to God: but to this it was replied, that John stood on the boundary line between the two dispensations. But when they alleged in their defence the case of the centurion, whose faith Christ himself had commended (Luke 7), and especially the example of the believing Cornelius, the force of such an appeal could not but be felt by their opponents. Tertullian himself, that zealous antagonist of the military profession amongst Christians, believed this argument could not be perfectly met, and admitted that warfare could not be wholly condemned in such as, having become Christians while they were soldiers, persevered in the calling they had once chosen, so far as nothing was done inconsistent with their steadfastness in the faith.† Against the profession of arms the command to Peter, in Matth. xxvi. 52, to put up again his sword into its place, was also quoted; ‡ for in despite of the context and of the manifest end for which it was given, the opponents of the military calling would consider it as addressed to all Christians.

Christianity, setting forth from the consciousness of redemption, as the centre of all that is distinctively Christian, had for its aim the assimilation and appropriation of whatever is pure in humanity, and of the relations of society to the kingdom of God. All was to be pervaded with the divine life: all was to be ennobled by it. The Christian appropriation of the world opposed both of the two previous methods of human development—one of which, heathenism, had been a secularizing of the spirit, a confounding of it with the world, and a deification of the worldly; the other, the Jewish legal position of opposition to the world, arising out of the consciousness

\* De idololatria, c. 18: Scito non semper comparanda esse vetera et nova, rudia et polita, cœpta et explicita, servilia et liberalia.

† De corona milit. c. 2.

‡ De idololatria, c. 19: Omnem postea militem Dominus in Petro exarmando discinxit.



of the inward schism produced by sin, when the world presented itself to the conscience simply as that which is without God and contrary to God. Contemplated from both these positions, the Christian life in its true import and significance was unintelligible. As viewed from the legal position, it appeared too free and closely verging on heathenism; while from the heathen position it appeared too servile, too constrained. The Christian life could not fail to be reproached as being righteous overmuch, as the *immodica superstitio*, the *nimum pietatis*,\*—sheer pietism. The Christians must have seemed a race that hated the light, that was dead to the world, and hence of no use in it.†

To these charges against the Christians Tertullian thus replies:‡ “How is it possible they should be such, who live in the midst of you, have the same food and clothing, the same necessities of life as yourselves? For we are no Brahmins, or Indian gymnosophists, no dwellers in the woods, no recluses shut out from the common haunts of men. We are deeply sensible of the gratitude we owe to God, our Lord and Creator; we despise not the enjoyment of his works; only we temper that enjoyment, in order to keep it from degenerating into excess or abuse. We, therefore, in common with you, inhabit this world, with its markets, baths, inns, workshops, fairs, and whatever else is considered necessary to the intercourse of life. We also, with you, pursue the business of navigation, OF WAR, of agriculture, of commerce; we share in your employments, and contribute of our labour to your profit and for the public service.”§

Yet while the Christians did not by any means withdraw

\* In an epitaph which Gilbert Burnet discovered at Lyons, and published in the first of his letters, the pagan husband says of his wife, a Christian, “quæ, dum nimia pia fuit, facta est impia.”

† See the words above quoted, page 126: “natio latebrosa et lucifuga,” &c. &c.

‡ Apologet. c. 42.

§ How remote the idea of the later monachism was from the minds of the earlier Christians generally is evident from a passage in Irenæus, where he is speaking of the dependence of Christians for the means of support on the heathens among whom they lived, l. IV. c. 30: Etenim, si is qui tibi hæc imputat, separatus est a gentiliū cœtu, et nihil est alienorum apud eum, sed est simpliciter nudus, et nudis pedibus et sine domo in montibus conversatur, quemadmodum aliquot ex his animalibus, quæ herbis vescuntur, veniam merebitur, ideo quod ignoret necessitates nostræ conversationis.

altogether from the business of life, they were in the habit of setting apart certain days for the purpose of examining their hearts in calm quiet before God, and in uninterrupted prayer consecrating anew their lives to God; that so they might return to their ordinary avocations with fresh zeal and vigour and renewed powers of sanctification. These days of holy devotion, of penitence and prayer, which individual Christians appointed according to their several needs, were often a kind of fast-days. That their minds whilst occupied with holy things might be less disturbed by sense, they were on such days accustomed to confine their bodily wants within stricter limits than usual, or else to fast entirely. In considering this fact, we must take into account the peculiar nature of that hot climate in which Christianity was first promulgated. Whatever was saved by their abstinence on these days was appropriated to the support of the poor brethren. There were also many who, in the warmth of their first love, upon their baptism, immediately gave to the church fund or to the poor a large portion of their earthly property, or all that they had, since, in order to express in the strongest manner their contempt for the earthly things by which their hearts had been hitherto enslaved, they felt constrained to declare most decidedly (what had now full possession of their hearts) the wish to sacrifice and to give up everything, if so be they might but win the heavenly pearl. With them it was as though the words of our Lord, "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me," had been addressed directly to themselves. Within the bosom of the church they led a quiet, retired life, supporting themselves by the labour of their hands, and remaining unmarried, in order that, undisturbed by earthly cares, they might devote themselves to prayer, to the study of the scriptures, to holy meditations, and to labouring for the kingdom of God; while of the earnings of their industry, all that remained over and above, after barely satisfying the most necessary wants of life, they devoted to objects of Christian charity. Such Christians were called the *Abstinent*, the zealous seekers after Christian perfection, *continentes*, *ἄσκηται*.\* There were also many others who, through the

\* Ἀσκήτιν, ἀσκήτης, a current word among pagans and Christians in this period, to denote a peculiarly rigid moral discipline.



influence of a pious Christian education, had from the earliest years imbibed such a love for divine things, that they desired to loosen, as far as possible, every earthly tie. Individuals of this class were to be found belonging to both the sexes;—the females were called distinctively *πάρθενοι*, virgins.\*

Even amongst the heathens at this time those who led lives consecrated to meditation were usually termed ascetics in the sense above given. Philosopher and ascetic were synonymous.† The term “philosophy” was now employed to denote the direction and bent of the whole life. But it must be admitted that this had already become also a mask for hypocrisy, as, for example, with the notorious pseudo-cynics. Now it sometimes happened that heathen ascetics were led by their earnest pursuit of moral perfection to embrace Christianity; and having become Christians, they still adhered to their former habits of life, which, in themselves, contained nothing repugnant to Christianity. Others, again, in whom Christianity first produced a more serious turn of life, adopted these habits as a token of the change that had been wrought in them. The attention which they attracted, by publicly appearing in the philosopher’s cloak,‡—the dress of these philosophical ascetics,—and the reverence paid to them by the multitude on account of their mode of life, were employed by them to commence philosophical and religious conversation with those who, out of respect or curiosity, gathered round them in the public walks or places of resort; and they thus published to them Christianity as the new and heavenly philosophy,§ which had come from the East. Assuredly it is a picture drawn from the very life, when Justin Martyr tell us|| that, when early one morning he made his appearance on the public walks, he was presently surrounded

\* Of such Tertullian speaks, *De cult. femin.* l. II. c. 9: *Aliqui abstinentes vino et animalibus esculentis, multi se spadonatui obsignant propter regnum Dei*; and Justin Mart. *Apolog.* II: *Πολλοί τινες καὶ πολλὰ ἐξηκοντούτοι καὶ ἑβδομηκοντούτοι, οἱ ἐκ παιδῶν ἐμαθῆτεύθησαν τῷ Χριστῷ, ἄφθοροι διαμένονσι*,—which, indeed, is not to be so understood as if all these had from the first purposely adopted such a mode of life.

† See, e. g., Artemidor. *oneirocrit.* IV., where he speaks of an *Ἀλῆξανδρος ὁ φιλόσοφος*, ἔμελε δὲ αὐτῷ, ὄντι ἀνδρὶ ἀσκήτῃ, οὔτε γάμου, οὔτε κοινωνίας, οὔτε πλούτου—and V. 18: *Ἐφίλοσόφησεν εὐτόνως καὶ τοῖς λόγοις καὶ τῇ ἀσκήσει χρησάμενος ἀκολούθως*.

‡ *Τρίβων, τριβώνιον*, pallium.

|| *Dial. c. Tryph. Jud.*

§ *Φιλοσοφία τῶν βαρβάρων*.

by many with the salutation, "Good morrow, philosopher;"\* whilst one of them added that he had been taught by his master in philosophy never to slight the philosopher's cloak, but to welcome with every civility those that appeared in it, and to endeavour to draw them into conversation; and that this remark led to a dialogue on the signs of true religion, and on Christianity. "Joy to thee," exclaims Tertullian to the philosopher's cloak,† "a better philosophy has deigned to wrap itself in thy folds since thou hast begun to be the garb of the Christian."

Though spiritual pride might easily attach itself to this mode of life, the spirit of Christian love and humility often shone forth, in such a form, with brighter splendour. An example of this kind is furnished by that Alcibiades who was one of the confessors imprisoned at Lyons.‡ Having accustomed himself, as an ascetic, to live on bread and water, he continued the same habits in the prison; when however by the voice of the Spirit within it was revealed to Attalus, another of the confessors, that Alcibiades was wrong in refusing to enjoy what God had created, and thus giving occasion of offence to other Christians, Alcibiades immediately submitted to this reproof, partaking without scruple of all that was set before him with thanksgiving to God.§

Now, though *such* ascetics were penetrated with a truly Christian spirit—a spirit of love and humility—yet we cannot fail to perceive, even here, a one-sided tendency, which, in the subsequent development of Christian life, was likely to become excessive. Christianity was designed to be the *principle that should rule the world*. It was to take into itself and appropriate to its own ends all that belongs to man and the world. But to effect this it was necessary, as we have already remarked, that it should first enter into a conflict with what had hitherto been the ruling principle of the world—a conflict with sin and the principle of heathenism and everything connected therewith. The purification of all this must therefore be the first aim of Christianity; although indeed this object could not be accomplished without the positive appropriation of whatever is pure in humanity. In the temporary development, this negative, aggressive tendency must necessarily ap-

\* Φιλόσοφε, χαῖρε!

† See above, p. 154, and the following.

‡ In his tract de pallio.

§ Euseb. l. V. c. 3.



pear first; and it might easily gain an undue predominance, so as to repress for a while the positive element of appropriation, by which alone the problem of Christianity could ever attain to its solution. Hence a one-sided ascetical tendency easily introduced itself into the earliest stages of the development of the Christian life, and more particularly in the case of those who embraced Christianity with their whole soul. Wherever this religion awakened in the first place a feeling of disgust at all worldly pursuits, enkindling in the mind the holy flame of love for the divine, and of aspiration after eternal life, this first movement would readily assume an ascetical shape. And then with this might easily be combined other elements, that had formed themselves independently of Christianity, in the previous development of the world, and which, without the creative influence of Christianity, would have taken a much wider sweep, and which could be finally conquered only by the might of this new principle of life. The buoyant youthful life of heathendom had sunk at length into a painful sense of inward disunion, of schism, and had surrendered itself to the dualistic and ascetic tendencies of the East. Accordingly, Christianity at its first appearance found such tendencies already existing, and these, which found a welcome and point of union in the deep-felt want of harmony, would have gained a still greater ascendancy, had not the consciousness of redemption proceeding from Christianity in proportion as it unfolded itself deprived them more and more of this point of union. But, beyond a doubt, this previously existing tendency to a false renunciation of the world and of sense might combine with the one-sided negative tendency which, as we have seen, so prominently manifested itself at first in the development of Christian life, and, consequently, in this way might assume a Christian shape and colouring.

Thus arose an undue estimation of the ascetical contemplative life and of celibacy, which was carried to the extreme of promising to such life a more exalted stage of future blessedness.\* It was in this feeling that a mistaken apprehension of our Saviour's words to the rich man, *Matt. xix.*, found a support. It was argued that these words denoted a perfection surpassing that

\* As is done expressly by Origen, *Homil. XIX. in Jerem. s. 4* Comp. Cyprian, *de habitu virginum*.

ordinary standard of a Christian life occupied in fulfilling all the duties of our earthly calling,—and consisting in the renunciation of every earthly good (the germ of the doctrine of the *concilia evangelica*). Now in this manner it became possible for an antagonism which essentially belonged to the principles of antiquity—but which was overcome and banished by the consciousness of redemption, of the principle of the divine life destined to ennoble *all* that belongs to humanity—imperceptibly to gain admission again into the evolution of Christianity itself;—we mean the antagonism between the ordinary and the higher life, the practical and the contemplative—between divine and human virtue. It is clear that this apprehension would coincide very well with the notion of a caste of priests, preëminently consecrated to God, who must hold themselves aloof from all worldly pursuits; thus too might the opinion have sprung up that celibacy belonged to the perfection of the spiritual order.\*

This false notion of opposition to the world had already become the mask for a worldly temper, which affected the appearance of holiness, or sought a life of ease at the expense of the church.† Cyprian was therefore obliged to write a tract of admonition and warning against the showy dress and love of display which had crept in among the rich virgins, at Carthage, who had consecrated themselves to God.‡ And thus, from disdaining what is in harmony with nature, and consequently agreeable also to Christianity, men were led to devise unnatural forms of society between the two sexes; in which nature, indignant to be so despised, quickly exercised a fearful reaction, and in a pernicious way introduced sensuality among the spiritual ranks,—as, for instance, when such virgins dwelt

\* See the council of Elvira (A.D. 305), from which, however, no inference can be drawn with regard to the general practice of the church. This council, in which the one-sided ascetical spirit above spoken of prevailed to an eminent degree, decreed at its early date, can. 33, that bishops, presbyters, and deacons, living with their wives, should be deposed from their places.

† See what is said against many *virgines* by Tertullian, who indeed was at this time a violent, over-heated accuser of the catholic church, but who must have felt that he had some ground for such charges: *Æmulatio illas non religio producit; aliquando et ipse venter, Deus eorum, quia facile virgines fraternitas suscipit.* De idololatria, c. 14.

‡ Comp. the tract de habitu virginum.



and lived in the same household with unmarried ecclesiastics, under the pretence of a purely spiritual connexion.\*

And from the praises thus given to the secluded life of ascetics and ecclesiastics above the ordinary life of Christians, this michievous consequence resulted, that they who were occupied in the common business of life forgot the greatness of their Christian calling, and thought they were justified in lowering its requisitions upon themselves. As early as the time of Clement of Alexandria there were those who, on being reminded of the seriousness that belonged to their Christian calling and on being exhorted not to put themselves on a level with the pagans in their rage for the public shows, would reply, "We cannot all be philosophers and ascetics; we are ignorant people; we cannot read; we understand nothing of the Holy Scriptures; ought such rigorous demands to be made upon us?"†

Yet we observe many indications, too, of a sound Christian spirit opposing itself to this false ascetical tendency. Such we find in an ancient work, the Shepherd of Hermas, which in the first centuries was of great authority. In regard to fasting it is here said,‡ "Above all, exercise thy abstinence in this, in refraining both from speaking and listening to evil; and cleanse thy heart from all pollution, from all revengeful feelings, and from all covetousness; and on the day that thou fastest, content thyself with bread, vegetables, and water, and thank God for these. But reckon up on this day what thy meal would otherwise have cost thee, and give the amount that it comes to to some widow or orphan, or to the poor. Happy for thee, if, with thy children and whole household, thou observest these things." Clement of Alexandria notices the fact that

\* The *συνίσαντοι*, as they were afterwards called, or subintroductæ. Against them, Cyprian, ep. 62, ad Pompon. Though Cyprian elsewhere, speaking in extravagant terms of the obligations connected with entering upon such a mode of life, even calls it a "*connubium spiritale cum Domino*," yet here he expresses himself with becoming moderation: *Si autem perseverare nolunt vel non possunt, melius est, ut nubant, quam in ignem delictis suis cadant*. But the council of Elvira decreed, in its 13th canon, that such fallen virgins who refused to return to their former condition should be refused communion, even in the moment of death.

† 'Αλλ' οὐ πάντες φιλοσοφοῦμεν, γράμματα οὐκ ἔμαθον. Clemens Pædagog. I. III. f. 255.

‡ Lib. III. Similitud. V.

many forms of heathen worship required in their priests celibacy and abstinence from meat and wine; that among the Indians there were rigid ascetics, namely, the Samaneans; and argues from this fact that usages which exist in other religions, and are even combined with superstition, cannot in themselves be peculiarly Christian. He then adds, "St. Paul declares that the kingdom of heaven consists not 'in meat and drink,' neither therefore in abstaining from wine and flesh, but 'in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.' As humility is shown, not by the chastising of the body, but by gentleness of disposition, so also abstinence is a virtue of the soul, consisting not in that which is without, but in that which is within the man. Abstinence has reference not to some one thing alone, not merely to pleasure, but abstinence consists also in despising money, in taming the tongue, and in obtaining by reason the mastery over sin."\*

When those of whom we lately spoke excused themselves from all severer requisitions on their daily walk, by pleading, "We are not all philosophers, not all of the spiritual order," Clement replied, "But are we not all striving after life? What sayest thou? How art thou then a believer? How lovest thou God and thy neighbour? Is not that philosophy? Thou sayest, 'I have never learned to read.' But if thou hast not learned to read, still thou canst not plead the excuse that thou hast *not heard*; for there is no need of any one's teaching thee this. (All hear the word preached, hear the scriptures read in the church.) But faith is not the exclusive possession of the wise of this world, but of the wise in God. The faith may be learned even without the scriptures; for there is a scripture thereof which is adapted even to the capacity of the most ignorant, is still divine—and that is love. Even the business of the world may be managed in an unworldly, in a godly manner."† Thus does Clement insist on the common spiritual and priestly calling of all believers, and he requires even of tradespeople and of tavern-keepers that they should

\* Clemens Strom. l. III. f. 446 et seq.

† Πίστις δὲ οὐ σοφῶν τῶν κατὰ κόσμον, ἀλλὰ τῶν κατὰ θεὸν ἐστὶ τὸ κτῆμα, ἡ δὲ καὶ ἄνευ γραμμάτων ἐκπαιδεύεται καὶ τὸ σύγγραμμα αὐτῆς, τὸ ἰδιωτικὸν ἅμα καὶ θεῖον, ἀγάπη κέκληται. Ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ ἐν κοσμῷ κοσμίως (a play upon words which cannot be exactly rendered), κατὰ θεὸν ἀπάγειν οὐ κινῶνται.



exhibit philosophy in their practice.\* On the other hand, for the purpose of correcting the opinion of those who held the renunciation of all worldly goods to be the true Christian perfection, misinterpreting Christ's words to the rich young man, the same Clement wrote his beautiful tract, "Who is the rich man that is seeking salvation?"† In this tract he endeavours to show that in Christianity the affections of the heart are the essential thing. "Our Saviour," says Clement, "does not, as many superficial reasoners assume, command us to throw away our earthly goods, but to banish all thinking about money, the love of it—that canker of the soul—the cares, the thorns of this *earthly* life, which choke the seed of the *divine* life. What does our Lord teach as something new, as the only life-giving doctrine, of which those of old knew nothing? What is this which is peculiarly His own, and the new creation? He demands not some outward act, that others also have done; but something higher, more divine, more perfect, which the former only serves to express, viz. that *all which is foreign* to the soul should be torn up by the roots and cast forth. For even those of old despised outward things and gave away, in fact, their earthly goods; but the inward desires only became the stronger, for they were filled with vanity, pride, and contempt for other men,—as if they had done something beyond the reach of humanity. A man may have thrown away his earthly goods and still retain the desire of them in his heart; thus will he expose himself to the double disquietude, having to regret both his prodigality and his loss of the necessities of life. What deeds of charity would exist among men if none had the means to bestow? And were *this* the doctrine of our Lord, would it not be at variance with many others of his glorious doctrines? Earthly property should be considered as materials and instruments for good uses, to be turned to a proper account by those who know how to use them rightly."

Clement recognised a divine dispensation in the unequal distribution of property, which was to serve as a material for Christian virtue. Community of goods, therefore, appeared to him as repugnant to the divine purpose.‡ "As food does us

\* Καὶ ταυτῇ φιλοσοφούντων οἱ ἀγοραῖοι καὶ οἱ κάπηλοι. Pædagog. l. III. f. 255.

† Τίς ὁ σωζόμενος πλούσιος; s. 11.

‡ Ὡς ἐξ ἑναντίων ὁ κόσμος σύγκειται, ὥσπερ ἐκ θερμοῦ καὶ ψυχροῦ, ξηροῦ τε καὶ ὑγροῦ, οὕτω καὶ τῶν δίδόντων καὶ τῶν λαμβανόντων. Stromat. l. III. f. 449.

no good in God's sight," says he, "so neither does a married or an unmarried state benefit us without knowledge, but only virtuous actions done with knowledge." \*

When the Montanists, of whom we shall presently speak, wished to impose new fasts and new laws of abstinence on the church, the spirit of evangelical liberty among the Christians made a strong remonstrance. They were accused of not duly distinguishing between the economy of the Old and of the New Testament; of making laws where, according to the spirit of the gospel, all should be free, and where every one should be at liberty to act according to his peculiar temperament and individual necessities. The only fast prescribed by God was fasting from bosom sins.†

Like others whose language we have already had occasion to quote, Commodian also rebuked the extravagant estimation in which martyrdom was held as an *opus operatum*. He declared that whoever was a martyr in disposition, whoever exercised love, humility, patience, was equal to the martyr without shedding a drop of blood.‡ "Many err," said he, "when they say we have conquered the enemy by our blood; and they will not conquer him, if he continues to assault them (if he plunges them into temptations of another kind.) § Thou, then, who wouldst become a martyr by the confessions of thy mouth, robe thyself in time of peace with all goodness, and be free from care."

While, however, the ascetical tendency was but a transient moment of one extreme to which the development of the Christian life was liable; on the other hand, we may see from

\* *Stromat.* l. IV. f. 533.

† See Tertullian, *de jejuniis*.

‡ *Instruc.* 48 :—

Multa sint martyria, quæ fiunt sine sanguine fuso.  
Alienum non cupere, velle martyrium habere,  
Linguam refrænare, humilem te reddere debes,  
Vim ultra non facere, nec factam reddere contra,  
Mons (which gives no good sense) patiens fueris, intellige te martyrem esse.

§ *Instruc.* 62 :—

Multi quidem errant dicentes, sanguine nostro,  
Vicinus iniquum, quo manente,

(which may be referred either to the nearest subject, iniquus, as I have rendered it, or the more remote, sanguis :—they do not want that victory which is won without blood)

Tu ergo, qui quæris martyrium tollere verbo,  
In pace te vesti bonis, et esto securus.



the very first a striking contrast to it in the power, which in its healthy development the Christian principle possessed to ennoble all the relations of domestic life. And this great result was principally effected by Christianity realising the true import of marriage as the harmonious union of two beings, differing by sex, into a higher spiritual oneness of life, destined by the communication of a divine life to reconcile all antitheses. Moreover, wherever Christianity found admission, the equal dignity of the female sex, as possessing, no less than the male, a nature created in the image of God, and allied to the divine nature, was brought distinctly before the consciousness; and thereby the weaker sex was invested with its due rights—in opposition to the principle of the ancient world, and particularly of the East, by which the woman was placed altogether in a subordinate relation to the man.\* Accordingly Clement of Alexandria, in opposition to the extravagant admirers of asceticism, insists on the Christian import of marriage and the domestic life. “The genuine Christian,” says he, “has the apostles for his example; and in truth, it is not in the solitary life one shows himself a *man*; but *he* gets the victory over other men, who, as a husband and father of a family, withstands all the temptations that beset him in providing for a wife and children, servants and an establishment, without allowing himself to be drawn from the love of God. The man with no household escapes many temptations: as he has only himself to provide for, he is inferior to the man who, having more to disturb him in working out his own salvation, yet fulfils more duties in social life, and truly exhibits in his family a miniature of providence itself.”† Describing the Christian matron, he says,‡ “The mother is the glory of her children; the wife of her husband; both are the glory of the wife, and God is the glory of them all.” And Tertullian:§ “What a union is that between two believers who have in common one hope, one wish, one law of life, one service of the Lord! Both, like brother and sister, undivided in spirit or body, nay, in the true sense two in one flesh, together they kneel, pray, and fast, mutually teach, exhort, and encourage each other; they are together in the church of God, and at the Lord’s

\* Also in the Ethic magn. of Aristotle, l. I. c. 34: *Χεῖρον ἢ γυνὴ τοῦ ἀνδρός.*

† Stromat. l. VII. f. 741.

‡ Pædagog. l. III. f. 250.

§ Ad uxorem, l. II. c. 8.

supper ; they share each other's troubles, persecutions, joys ; neither hides aught from the other ; neither avoids the other , there is free liberty to visit the sick, to relieve the needy , psalms and hymns are sung between them, and each vies with the other in singing the praise of their God. Christ rejoices to behold and hear such things, and on such He sends His peace. Where there are two, there He is also ; and where He is, there evil is not."

It was required of the Christian matron that, by the sobriety of her whole demeanour, by her decent and simple attire,\* she should show forth the spirit that ruled within, and that thus, by her very appearance, she should shine as a light, in an age of excessive display, luxury, and corruption.

But here again there were two opposite parties. While, to one, poverty of apparel seemed inseparably connected with the essence of humility, and to be implied in the idea of the *form* of a servant, as distinctive of the Christian character, the other maintained, "it is enough to have the sentiments which become Christian women. God looks on the heart—the outward appearance is nothing. Why make a display of the change that has been wrought in us? Rather ought we to furnish the heathens with no occasion for blaspheming the Christian name, and for accusing Christianity as being incompatible with the customs of the world.† We possess these earthly goods, why may we not use them? Why may we not enjoy what we have? For whom were these precious objects created, if not for us? Who are to enjoy the *costly* articles, if all prefer the *cheap*?"‡ To the latter argument Clement of Alexandria replied, "Even though all things are *given* us, though all things are *allowed* us, though all things are *lawful* for us, yet, as the apostle says, all things are not expedient. God has created our race for doing good and communicating ; he has created everything for all ; everything, therefore, is a common good ; and the wealthy should not make of their wealth an exclusive possession. Such reasoning, therefore, is not humane, it does not correspond with our social afflictions. Love will rather speak thus : 'I have it—why should I not

\* Comp. Commodian. Instructiones, 59,—the satirical remarks directed against the gaudy apparel of Christian women.

† Tertullian *De cultu feminarum*, particularly l. II. c. 11.

‡ Clemens *Pædagog.* l. II. c. 12.



bestow it on the needy?"\* Tertullian says, 'What reasons can you have for going about in gay apparel, when you are removed from all which makes it requisite? You do not go about to the temples, you visit not the public shows, you have nothing to do with pagan festivals. You have other and more serious reasons for appearing abroad. Is it not either a sick brother to be visited, the communion to be celebrated, or a sermon delivered? and if offices of courtesy or friendship call you among pagans, why not appear in your own peculiar armour, and especially as you are going among unbelievers, that so the difference may be seen between the servants of God and of Satan, that you may serve for an example to them, and that they may be edified by you?'

Strictly maintaining the peculiarly Christian view of marriage, many believed that where the bond of religion did not unite hearts together, where, on the contrary, there was disunion on this the highest concern of the inward life, the true import of marriage could never be realised. They therefore discountenanced marriage between Christians and pagans. Tertullian labours to show how a pious Christian woman, with whom Christianity was as the soul of her life, who belonged to the Church as one of its living members, and in its communion felt herself in the way of salvation, must, by living with a heathen, be not only hindered and disturbed in her religious duties in a thousand ways, but also injured in her feelings. "Is it a day of prayer," says he, "the husband will devote it to the use of the bath; is a fast to be observed, he will on this day make a banquet for his friends. But never will the business of the household be more heavy and engrossing than at the very time when the duties of Christian charity call the wife abroad." And then, after the passage which we have already quoted, relating to those duties of the Christian mistress of a family, in the performance of which she is hindered by her pagan husband, he goes on: "What shall her husband sing to her, or she to her husband? Would she like to hear anything from the theatre or from the tavern? Where is there mention of God, where any invocation of Christ? Where in their conversation is faith nourished by the quo-

\* The same thing is said by Tertullian, in the works above referred to, and by Cyprian, *De habitu virginum*. Perhaps Tertullian and Cyprian had both read this work of Clement.

tation of Scripture? \* Where is there quickening of the Spirit? Where the divine blessing?"

In this case the question related to a marriage that was to be contracted, where as yet no contract had been made. It was very different where a connexion, which was not to be dissolved but sanctified by Christianity, already existed, and one of the parties to it became a convert. This case Tertullian expressly distinguishes from the former. "It is different with those who, when they came to the faith, were already connected by marriage with heathens. Since such a marriage is valid with God, why should it not go on with his blessing, so that it may continue to be spared from many afflictions, disquietudes, and stains, enjoying, as it does on one side, the protection of divine grace? But it is another thing when one enters uncalled and voluntarily into forbidden relations." "The way in which his wife was converted to Christianity," continues Tertullian, "may make a strong impression on the heathen husband himself, so that he may be cautious how he disturbs her too much, or watches her too narrowly. He has witnessed a great event, he has seen the proofs of what God has wrought, he knows that she has become better. Thus will those be more easily gained to the faith in whose homes the grace of God is become as it were domesticated." It is true the observance of such a change did not always make this favourable impression. Many a blind devotee to heathenism, when he saw that his wife, whose conduct he had before been obliged to watch narrowly, had become all at once domestic and exemplary, but at the same time felt that Christianity had produced the change, divorced her whose vices he had before tolerated. The case also sometimes occurred of a Christian woman who, being married to a vicious heathen, had previously, when a heathen, been herself the minister to his vices, but who now, as a Christian, felt bound by her conscience to discontinue such practices. She would endeavour at first by her exhortations and remonstrances to lead him to

\* *Ubi fomenta fidei de scripturarum interjectione?* according to the reading in Rigaltius' edition. According to that of Pameliuſ, "interjectione,"—"by the intermingled reading of the Holy Scriptures." It hardly admits of being determined which is the correct reading. As the whole passage relates to quotations in conversation, the first is to the point. And if this is the right one, it follows from it that husband and wife must possess a familiar acquaintance with the Bible.



a better way. But when these were indignantly repelled, she would be forced, if she would avoid participating in his sinful life, to obtain a separation from him; and this proved the occasion of many persecutions by exasperated husbands.\*

This Christian view of marriage early made it a custom to add the *sanction* of the church to the civil contract. The pastors of the church and the deaconesses were to be convoked, and they were to see that the marriage was contracted according to the will of God, and not from human passion, and that all was done to the honour of God.† Bride and bridegroom proceeded to the table of the Lord, and there partook together of the communion. They presented a common offering to the church, and in the prayers of the church connected with the communion the blessing of God was specially implored on the newly married couple. How highly the Christians valued this blessing of the church appears from the following passage of Tertullian:‡ “In what language can we express the happiness of that marriage which is concluded by the church, sealed by the communion, and consecrated by the church’s blessing; which angels announce, and our Heavenly Father ratifies?”

Prayer was considered the soul of the whole Christian life. Even they who otherwise, from their bent of mind and habits of thinking, differed widely on many important points, were agreed on this. Although the spirit of Christianity often brings together the most opposite natures, still it would be difficult to find a stronger contrast than that between the practical realism of Tertullian, so inclined to give a bodily form and shape to everything, and the speculative turn of Origen, who was equally disposed to the opposite extreme of spiritualising everything. Both, however, when they come to discourse of prayer, appear equally penetrated with vital Christianity; on this subject both seem to speak from their own inward experience, and in both the essential Christian spirit breaks through all individual peculiarities. Tertullian, in accordance with a prevailing view of those early Christian times, contemplates prayer as the exercise of the priestly office of all Christians. “It is the spiritual sacrifice,” says he,§

\* See Justin Mart. Apolog. II.

† Ignat. ep. II. ad Polycarp, s. 5.

‡ Ad uxor. I. II. c. 8.

§ Cap. 28, De orat. in the pieces first published by Muratori, T. III.

“ which has superseded the sacrifices of the old covenant, Isa. i. 11. This passage informs us what God does *not* require; but the gospel teaches us what He *does* require of us: ‘The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for God is a spirit.’ We are the true worshippers and the true priests, who pray in the spirit, and thus offer the sacrifice which is agreeable to His nature, and well-pleasing in His sight—that which He requires. And what is there which the God who requires this prayer can refuse to the prayer that comes from the spirit and the truth? How much do we read, hear, believe of the proofs of its efficacy!” He then describes the peculiar efficacy of *Christian* prayer, and shows how it ought to correspond to the peculiar nature of the religious constitution under the New Testament; teaching that *Christian* prayer reveals its true power, *not in delivering men miraculously from death and suffering, but in making them capable of enduring death and suffering with a tranquil mind and cheerful resignation.* “ By virtue of imparted grace it dulls not the sense of pain, but arms the sufferer with strength to bear it. The prayer of the Christian draws down no retribution from heaven, but it averts God’s anger; it watches for enemies; it intercedes for persecutors; it obtains forgiveness of sins; it delivers from temptation; it comforts and helps the weak-hearted; it quickens the strong. *Prayer is the bulwark of faith.*” Origen says,\* “ How much would each one among us have to relate of the efficacy of prayer, if only he were thankfully to recall God’s mercies! Souls which had long been unfruitful, becoming conscious of their dearth, and fructified by the Holy Spirit through persevering prayer, have given forth words of salvation full of the intuitions of truth. What mighty enemies, that threatened to annihilate our holy faith, have from time to time been brought to shame! Our confidence was in those words, ‘Some put their trust in chariots and in horses, but we will think on the name of the Lord our God’ (Ps. xx. 8); and verily we experienced that the horse is but a vain thing to save a man. The might even of bewildering arguments, sufficient to stagger many who

Anecdotor. bibl. Ambros. [Bishop Kaye, according to Rev. H. J. Rose, questions the genuineness of these additional chapters.—*Eng. Ed.*]

\* De orat. s. 13.



are accounted believers, has been often vanquished by him who trusts in prayer. How many instances are there of those who were placed in temptations difficult to be overcome, yet suffered no injury from them, but came forth unharmed, without even the smell of the hostile flames having passed upon them! And what shall I further say? How often has it happened that they who were exposed to wild beasts, to evil spirits, and cruel men, have appeased them by their prayers, so that their teeth could not touch us who were the members of Christ! We know that many who had fallen from the precepts of the Lord, and were already in the jaws of death, have been delivered by the prayer of penitence."

The same father contemplates prayer in its inseparable unity with the whole of life, when he says,\* "He prays without ceasing who suitably unites prayer with action; for works also are a part of prayer; since it would be impossible to understand the words of the apostle, 'Pray without ceasing,' in any practicable sense, unless we regard the whole life of the believer as one great continuous prayer,† of which what is commonly called prayer forms but a part."

We recognise here a mode of thinking grounded in the essence of primitive Christianity, and intimately connected with the universal priesthood, which distinguishes the Christian position as well from the pagan as from the Jewish—the view of prayer as an act embracing the *whole* life—making the whole Christian life a continuous prayer. In this light Origen says, in his exposition of the Lord's prayer,‡ "We ought not to think that words have been taught us only to be repeated at certain stated seasons of prayer. If we understand properly what was said in regard to 'praying without ceasing,' then our whole life—if really we do thus pray without ceasing—must call out 'Our Father which art in heaven;' if we have our conversation, not on earth, but in heaven, if we are thrones of God, inasmuch as the kingdom of God has its seat in all who bear the image of the Man from heaven, and have thus become heavenly themselves." Clement of Alexandria says,§ "Prayer, if I may speak so boldly, is intercourse with God. Even if we do but lisp,

\* De orat. c. 12.

† Εἰ πάντα τὸν βίον τοῦ ἁγίου μίαν συναπτομένην μεγάλην εἵπομεν εὐχὴν.

‡ De orat. c. 22.

§ Stromat. l. VII. f. 722.

even though we silently address God without opening the lips, yet we cry to Him in the inward recesses of the heart; for God always listens to the perfect direction of the inward soul to Him."\* Again, when he is wishing to depict the ideal of a devout Christian, and one mature in knowledge, the same writer says,† "He will pray in every place, but not openly, to be seen of men. Even when he is walking for recreation, in his converse with others, in silence, in reading, in all rational pursuits, he finds opportunity for prayer. And although he is only thinking on God in the little chamber of *the soul*, and calling upon his Father with silent aspirations, *God is near him* and with him, for he is still speaking to Him."‡

The description, above quoted from Tertullian, of the blessedness of a Christian marriage, shows that to assemble together, to join in spiritual songs and in reading of scripture, was part of the daily edification of a Christian family. In like manner Clement of Alexandria recommends to Christian couples to make prayer and the reading of the Bible§ a morning employment of every day. Such of the controversial writings of Tertullian on matters of Christian life and morality as were addressed to laymen prove that even they were well acquainted with the scriptures, and were accustomed to judge the circumstances of life by them.

In general it was the custom of the Christians to observe the times of prayer which had been previously in use among the Jews; namely, the third, the sixth, and the ninth hours of the day, which correspond with our nine of the forenoon, twelve, and three in the afternoon. Not that they wished to confine the duty of prayer to any stated times, but, as Tertullian explained,|| "for the purpose of reminding those of their duty who might be drawn away from it by their worldly business." Moreover the Christians were accustomed to sanctify with prayer all the more important portions of the day, and all transactions of importance, whether relating to the spiritual or the bodily life; since even by receiving a heavenly direction the concerns of the world were to be made holy.

\* Πᾶσαν γὰρ τὴν ἐνδιάθετον ὁμιλίαν ὁ Θεὸς ἀδιάλειπτως ἰπαῖται.

† Stromat. l. VII. f. 728.

‡ Ὁ δὲ ἐγγὺς ἔτι λαλοῦντος πάρεστιν.

§ Εὐχή καὶ ἀνάγνωσις. Pædagog. l. II. f. 194, D. || De orat. c. 25.



"It becomes the believer," says Tertullian, "neither to take food nor to enter a bath without interposing a prayer; for the strengthening and refreshing of the soul should precede the strengthening and refreshing of the body, the heavenly the earthly." Thus, too, the Christian who had received into his house a brother from a distant land, and entertained him with all the bodily refreshments in his power, was not to dismiss him without prayer; he was to feel as if he saw in the stranger the Lord himself; and the guest was not to value the earthly refreshment which he had received from his brother above the heavenly which he bestowed on him at parting.\* On pressing emergencies, affecting either the church in general, or individual members in whom all felt great interest, they all assembled for prayer. All general deliberations were also opened with prayer. It was in prayer that the brotherly communion, the mutual sympathy of the members of the One Body, was especially to be shown; each was to pray in the spirit of all, and to commend the interests of all the brethren, which he must regard as his own, before the great Head of the Church, and, through him, before Eternal Love. So Cyprian, in his exposition of the Lord's prayer, "The teacher of peace and brotherly love wished not that each individual should pray for himself alone, but that every one should pray for all. We say not *my* Father, but *our* Father; nor do we pray each for the forgiveness of *his own sins* alone, nor for *himself alone*, that he may not be led into temptation, and that he may be delivered from the evil. Ours is a common prayer; and when we pray, we pray not for individuals, but for the whole church, because as members of the church we are all one. That God who is the Author of peace and concord wished that every one should pray for all, even as He has in-

\* As this passage of Tertullian, *De orat.* c. 26, is not without its difficulties, I will subjoin a translation of it: "But he himself too (the brother from abroad), after having been entertained by the brethren,"—I suppose in this place *exceptus* should be read instead of *exemptis*,—"must not value the earthly refreshments more highly than the heavenly; for his faith would be at once condemned (i. e. he would thereby evince his unbelief, if he valued the parting prayer, the blessing of the Christian brother his entertainer, as of no account compared with the bodily refreshment bestowed); or how shalt thou say, in obedience to the Lord's precept, Peace be unto this house! unless thou returnest to those in the house the blessing (previously received from them)."

cluded all in one." And when Cyprian, the bishop of Carthage, during the pressure of persecution, was encouraging his church to prayer, he wrote to them,—“Let each of you pray to God, not for himself alone, but for all the brethren, as the Lord has taught us to pray.”

Convinced that divine things could be understood only by the light of God's Spirit, and that this heavenly fountain was opened to man by prayer, the Christians regarded this exercise as the necessary means to the right understanding of scripture. When Origen, that great father of the church, who had availed himself of all the human aid to be found in his time for the exposition of scripture and the elucidation of its doctrines, and, moreover, directed to this object all the vast resources of his learning and speculation, was exhorting his disciple, the young Gregory, (afterwards called Thaumaturgus,) to diligent “seeking and knocking” in the study of Scripture, he added, “Be not, however, content with seeking and knocking; to a knowledge of divine things the most necessary means is prayer.\* Inciting us to this, our Saviour did not say alone, ‘Knock and it shall be opened to you; seek and ye shall find;’ but also, ‘Ask and it shall be given you.’”

On those days which were specially consecrated to the memory of Christ's Resurrection, the Christians were accustomed to pray standing, as a token that Christ had raised up to heaven those who were fallen and sunk in the mire of the earth; on all other days they prayed kneeling. Yet Origen warned Christians against the delusion which might lead them, in the outward form, to forget the inward affection. He pointed from the latter to the former, and laboured to show that outward things, apart from the inward sentiment, are utterly without significance, and, considered in themselves, an indifferent matter. “Before a man stretches out his hands to heaven he must,” he says,† “raise his soul upwards; and before he raises up his eyes he must lift up his spirit to God; for there can be no doubt that, of a thousand possible positions of the body, that with outstretched hands and uplifted eyes is to be preferred to all others, as a sign of those directions of the soul which are most befitting in prayer. We are of opinion that this posture should be observed where there is

\* Αναγκαιότης γὰρ καὶ ἡ περὶ τοῦ νοῦν τὰ θεῖα εὐχή.

† Cap. 31.



nothing to forbid it; for in certain circumstances, such as sickness, one may pray even sitting or lying. And under certain circumstances—as, for example, on shipboard or in situations which allow no opportunity of retiring to offer up the suitable prayer—it is possible to pray without seeming to do so. And since kneeling is enjoined when a man is confessing his sins to God and imploring forgiveness, he should feel that this posture is to be the sign of a spirit bowed down and humble.” It is to such a spiritual bowing the knee in self-humiliation at the name of Jesus, that the passage in Philip. ii. 10, is by Origen supposed to refer. Tertullian and Cyprian also teach that prayer does not consist in the vain show of outward gestures, but in the disposition of the heart towards God. “God hears not the voice but the heart,” says Cyprian. “He who discerns the thoughts of men needs not to be reminded by their cry; for Hannah, in the Book of Kings, is the type of the church, which flies to God, not with noisy prayer, but in the silent depths of the heart. She spoke in silent prayer, but her faith was known to God.”

In Commodian’s collection of rules for the Christian life, we find this laid down with the rest—that prayer, unaccompanied with works of Christian love, is nothing.\*

We now pass from the consideration of the Christian life generally, and of family devotion, to the forms of public worship.

## II. *Public Worship of God.*

### 1. *Character of Christian Worship generally.*

That which constituted the peculiar character of Christian worship, and which distinguished it from every other kind of religious worship, was the fundamental conception from which the whole character of the Christian life originally took its shape—the idea of the universal priesthood of Christians—of a worship of God in spirit and in truth, confined to no special time or place, and to no particular class of actions, but embracing alike every action of the whole life. This distin-

\* Instruct. 79:—

Orantem si cupias exaudiri de cœlo,  
Rumpe de latibulis nequitie vincla;  
Aut si benefactis ores miseratur egenis,  
Ne dubites quin quod petieris detur oranti.  
Tu sane si nudus benefactis Deum adores,  
In totum ne facias sic orationes inepte.

guishing character of the Christian worship developed itself in the churches of the gentile Christians founded by the Apostle St. Paul, in contradistinction, first of all, to Judaism, and afterwards in opposition likewise to paganism. Latterly, indeed, and as the result of that revolution of Christian views which we adverted to in speaking of the history of the constitution of the church, a reaction of the Jewish principle began to manifest itself in the forms of worship, as the opposition to that principle became more feeble. The simple spiritual character of the Christian worship was, from the very first, a very singular and striking phenomenon to the heathens—particularly the fact that none of the outward pomp belonging to all other religions was to be found in it—"no temples, no altars, no images!" When Celsus reproached the Christians with this, Origen replied, "In the highest sense God's temple and image are in the humanity of Christ; and consequently, in all believers who are actuated by the spirit of Christ—living statues, with which no Jupiter of Phidias is worthy to be compared!"\* Christianity led men to retire from the distractions of the outward world to the stillness of the inward sanctuary, there to pour out their hearts before Him who dwelt in *this* temple; but it also kindled in their hearts flames of love which sought after communion, by means of which they might strengthen one another, and unite themselves in one holy flame, rising upward to heaven. Communion in prayer and devotion was considered a means of sanctification, since it was known that the Lord was present with his Spirit in the midst of those who were gathered together in his name. Nothing, however, seems to have been more remote from the thoughts of Christians generally than to ascribe any special sanctity to the place of meeting.† Such an idea would seem to savour of paganism; and it was less likely for Christians to fall into such a notion at the beginning, since their first places of assembly were common rooms in private houses, according as any member of the church had an appropriate dwelling. Thus Gaius of Corinth is called, Rom. xvi., the host of the whole church, because the church was accustomed to assemble

\* c. Cels. l. VIII. s. 17.

[† And yet 1 Cor. xi. 22, seems at least by the antithesis to imply some such special sanctity in the place of the church's assembling.—*Eng. Ed.*]



in a room of his house. Origen says,\* “The place where believers assemble for prayer has something about it wholesome and profitable;” but it is only the importance of *this spiritual* fellowship that he insists on. “Christ, with the host of angels,” he supposes, “are present in the assembly of the faithful, and therefore prayer in such assemblies ought not to be despised or neglected, for they had a peculiar power for him who comes to them with a sincere heart.” “It is not the place but the congregation of the elect that I call the church,” says Clement of Alexandria.† Tertullian remarks,‡ “We may pray in every place that occasion or necessity may furnish; for the apostles who prayed to God and sang his praise in the prison, within the hearing of the keepers, surely did nothing contrary to the commands of our Lord, any more than St. Paul did when, in the ship and before the eyes of all, he consecrated the Lord’s supper.” Acts xxvii.

It could not fail to happen, indeed, that the very thing which Christianity was to overcome—the tendency, viz. to make religion an outward thing, exclusively confined to particular times and places, would gain admission even into Christianity; but against such corrupt tendencies the pure Christian spirit soon raised its voice. Of their early existence we have evidence in the words of Clement of Alexandria, when he says,§ “The disciples of Christ ought to be as praiseworthy in their whole conduct as they appear in the church; they should really *be*, and not merely *seem* to be such—so gentle, so devout, so amiable. But I know not how it is that, with the place, they change their habits and their manners, just as it is said of the polypus, that it changes its colour according to the nature of the rock to which it clings. As soon as they leave the church they lay aside the spiritual demeanour which they there put on, and become like the multitude with whom they live. They convict themselves of falsehood, and show what they really are in their hearts, by laying aside their assumed mask of decorum. They who profess to honour the word of God leave it behind them in the place where they heard it.”

\* De orat. c. 31.

† Οὐ γὰρ οὖν τὸν τόπον, ἀλλὰ τὸ ἄθροισμα τῶν ἐκλεκτῶν ἐκκλησίαν καλῶ.  
Stromat. l. VII. f. 715, B.

§ Pædagog. l. III. f. 257.

‡ De orat. c. 24.

2. *The Places of Assembly used by the Christians.*

We have already observed that the places of Christian assembly were at first rooms in private houses belonging to different members of the church. In large towns, where such a place of assembly could not accommodate all, it became necessary that smaller portions of the community dwelling at a distance should choose other places for their meeting on the Sunday. When any one distinguished for the talent of communicating doctrinal instruction settled in a town, he, we may suppose, formed a circle within the church, which accordingly met at his house to hear his spiritual discourses. This is perhaps the meaning of the passages in Paul's epistles concerning churches in the house of Aquila and of others; \* and to this Justin Martyr may have alluded when, to the Roman prefect's question, "Where do you assemble?" he replied, "Where each man can and will. You believe, doubtless, that we all meet together in one place. But it is not so; for the God of the Christian is not confined to one spot, but his invisible presence fills heaven and earth, and in all places he is worshipped by the faithful." Justin then adds, that whenever he came to Rome it was his custom to reside in one particular place, where those Christians who were instructed by him,†

\* The church in his house, ἡ κατ' οἶκον αὐτοῦ ἐκκλησία. In such passages the reference certainly cannot be to places of assembly for the whole church, since in several instances this ἡ κατ' οἶκον τινος ἐκκλησία is expressly distinguished from the whole community; 1 Cor. xvi. 19 and 20. At Ephesus the church, in the house of Aquila and Priscilla, is first mentioned, and then *all* the brethren, which, according to this supposition, would be the same thing. Comp. Coloss. iv. 15. Again, there is another objection to this explanation, viz. that it would make the church meet in the house of Aquila when he resided at Rome, his ordinary abode, and when he was at Ephesus. Comp. Rom. xvi. 5, and 1 Cor. xvi. 19. But it is very unlikely that the church would constantly change its place of meeting on the arrival of Aquila. It is more reasonable to suppose that men who, like the tent-maker Aquila, were obliged by their occupation to have large and commodious dwellings wherever they took up their residence, were in the habit of giving up *one* apartment for the use of a portion of the church; especially when such a person was also fitted, as was perhaps the case with Aquila, by his gift of teaching, to conduct the exercises of *small* assemblies, in the capacity of a διδάσκαλος. Comp. above, p. 257, and my History of the Planting, &c., Vol. I. p. 208 of the original.

† This accordingly would be ἡ κατ' οἶκον τοῦ Ἰουστίνου ἐκκλησία.



and wished to hear his discourses, were accustomed to assemble. Other places of assembly he had not visited.

In these places of assembly arrangements were gradually made to meet the requirements of Christian worship. An elevated seat was constructed for reading the scriptures and delivering the sermon;\* and a table set for the distribution of the Lord's supper, to which the name of altar (*ara*, *altare*) was given so early as in the time of Tertullian—not perhaps without some admixture of the Old Testament idea of sacrifice, or at least not without furnishing occasion for the speedy admission of this idea. As the Christian communities became larger and wealthier, church buildings were erected expressly for their use. This appears to have been the case as early as the third century, for in the edict of Gallienus mention is already made of the Christians' *θρησκευσιμοι τόποι* (places of worship).† By the reign of Diocletian many ecclesiastical buildings of great magnificence had already been raised in the larger cities.

*The use of images* was originally unknown to the worship and excluded from the churches of the Christians; and so in general it continued throughout this period. The union of religion and art in heathenism made the early Christians to regard the latter with suspicion. As in the heathen system the taste for the beautiful had often come into collision with, and had even opposed itself to, the moral sense, so the first ardour of Christian zeal was inclined to reverse the relation. The religious consciousness readily assumed a direction opposed to the æsthetic principle of the ancient world; and the Holy disdained the beautiful forms with which the unholy had long been allied. Men were more inclined to push to an undue extreme the idea of the appearance of the godlike in the form of a servant, with which the oppressed condition of the struggling church of this age so fully agreed, than to seek to ennoble the divine by any beauty of form. This tendency is especially proved by the opinion, so very general in the primitive church, that Christ

\* *Suggestus, pulpitum.*

† See above, p. 194, and the following. If any confidence is to be placed in the narrative of the Chronicle of Edessa, cited in Assemani *Bibliotheca Oriental.* T. I. f. 391 (see above, p. 110), a Christian church had been built in Edessa as early as the year 302; and if the explanation of that passage by Michaelis, *Orientalische und exegetische Bibliothek*, Theil. X. S. 61, is correct, this church was separated thus early into three parts, according to the pattern of the Jewish temple.

veiled his inward divine majesty beneath a mean outward appearance the most directly opposed to it; an opinion which they supported by appealing to Is. liii. 2, which passage, relating to the Messiah, they interpreted literally. Thus Clement of Alexandria admonishes the Christians against placing too high a value on personal beauty, by appealing to the instance of Christ. "Our Lord himself is said to have been *without comeliness* in his outward appearance; and who is *better* than our *Lord*? But He did not manifest in Himself that beauty of body which consists in the sensible appearance, but the true beauty both of soul and of body; that of the soul in beneficence, and that of the body in its destination for an imperishable existence." \*

Church teachers of the most opposite habits of mind, whether of a more sensuous or of a more spiritual way of thinking—Realists or Idealists, who, by reason of these different mental tendencies, might, in regard to this matter, be expected to hold conflicting views such as did actually spring up from this source in later times—were nevertheless united on this point by a common opposition to the practices of heathenism, and by a common effort to preserve pure and undefiled the worship of God in spirit and in truth. Clement of Alexandria is as little favourable as Tertullian to the religious use of images. "We must not," he remarks, when speaking against the heathen use of images, "adhere to the sensuous, but we must rise to the spiritual. The familiarity of daily sight lowers the dignity of the divine, and to wish to honour a spiritual being by means of earthly matter is to degrade it by sensuousness." From these remarks it must be evident how repugnant, on the whole, all images of Christ must have been to the notions of the Christians in this age. Pagans, like Alexander Severus,† who recognised something of a divine nature in Christ, and sects which combined heathenism and Christianity together, were the first to introduce images of Christ; as, for instance, the gnostic sect of the Carpocratians, who placed his image beside the busts of Plato and Aristotle.

\* Pædagog. l. III. c. 1 : Τὸν κύριον αὐτὸν τὴν ὄψιν αἰσχρὸν γεγονέναι, διὰ Ἡσαΐου τὸ πνεῦμα μαρτυρεῖ.

† Eusebius says, likewise, Hist. eccles. l. VII. c. 18, that *heathens*, agreeably to their notions, were the first to provide themselves with pictures of *Christ*, *Peter*, and *Paul*, as benefactors of mankind. This is easily explained by the religious eclecticism of that period.



It was not in churches, but in private houses, that religious images first came into use among the Christians. In the intercourse of daily life the Christians saw themselves everywhere surrounded by the objects of heathen mythology, or, at least, by such as shocked their moral and Christian feelings. Representations of this sort covered the walls of rooms, drinking vessels, and signet-rings, on which the heathens frequently had the images of their gods engraven, so that they might worship them when they pleased. In place of these objects, so offensive to their religious and moral sentiments, the Christians naturally sought to substitute others more agreeable to them. Thus they were fain to put on their goblets the figure of a shepherd carrying a lamb on his shoulder, as the symbol of the Saviour who, according to the parable in the gospel, saves the sinner that returns to Him.\* And Clement of Alexandria says, in reference to the signet-rings of the Christians,† “Let our signets be a dove, (the symbol of the Holy Spirit,) or a fish,‡ or a ship sailing towards heaven, (the symbol of the Christian church and of the individual Christian soul,) or a lyre, (the symbol of Christian joy,) or an anchor (the symbol of Christian hope); and he who is a fisherman will not be forgetful of the Apostle Peter, and of the children brought up out of the water;§ for no idolatrous images should be engraved by those who are forbidden all intercourse with idols; as also neither sword nor bow by those who strive after peace; nor goblets by such as are the friends of sobriety.” And yet, perhaps, religious paintings passed, as early as the end of the third century, from domestic use into the churches, the walls of them being adorned in this manner. The council of Elvira, in the year 303, opposed this innovation as an abuse, and forbade “the objects of worship and adoration to be painted on the walls.”|| The visible representation of the

\* Tertullian, *De pudicitia*, c. 7: *Procedant ipsæ picturæ calicum vestrorum*. Cap. 10: *Pastor, quem in calice depingis*. The figure of Christ on the cup seems not to have been pleasing to the Montanistic ascetism.

† *Pædagog.* l. III. f. 246 and 247.

‡ The same reference as in the case of the fisherman—also an allusion to the anagram of Christ's name, ΙΧΘΥΣ=Ιησοῦς Χριστός, Θεοῦ Υἱός, Σωτήρ.

§ The Christians, whom Christ, the divine teacher, the *Θεὸς παιδαγωγός*,—leads through baptism to regeneration.

|| *Ne, quod colitur et adoratur in parietibus depingatur*. Concil. Illibert. can. 36. It must be admitted, however, that the interpretation

cross probably found its way very early, both in the domestic and ecclesiastical life of the Christians. This token was peculiarly common among them. It was the sign of blessing when they rose in the morning and when they retired at night, when they went out and when they came in; it was indeed employed in all the transactions of daily life. It was the sign which the Christians involuntarily made when any sudden calamity befel them.\* It was a sensible expression of the truly Christian idea, that all the actions of Christians, as well as their whole life, ought to be sanctified by the faith in Christ crucified, and by a reference to Him; as well as that this faith is the most effectual means of obtaining the triumph over, and securing protection against, all evil. Too soon, however, and too easily, did men confound the idea with the symbol which represented it; and the efficacy of the faith in Christ crucified was transferred to the outward sign, to which a supernatural, sanctifying, protecting power was ascribed—an error of which vestiges may be found even as early as in the third century.

We now pass from the consideration of places of public worship, to that of the seasons of worship and the festivals of the Christians.

### 3. *Seasons of Public Worship and Festivals.*

Our general remarks on the essential character of Christian worship apply also to its festivals, and this is particularly the case with the observation that the spirit of universality in Christianity abolished all specialities. The Christian worship, claiming for itself the entire life, and flowing from a conversation in heaven that depended not on the elements of the world, was no longer to be confined exclusively to any particular place or time. In the fulfilment of the law by New Testament, i. e. the perfect sanctification of the whole life, in which every day alike is consecrated to God, the Old Testament law of the Sabbath must find its repeal. Not barely the observance of Jewish feasts, but all forms and modes of particularizing the

of this canon is not very clear. It contains a two-fold ambiguity. The phrase "quod colitur et adoratur" may be understood as referring to objects of religion generally, or more *strictly* to objects of proper worship, to images of Christ, or symbolical representations of God—of the Trinity. The term "walls" may also be taken in two different senses, either as referring to the walls of private houses or those of the church.

\* Comp. Tertullian, *De corona milit.* c. 3.



Christian life by an exclusive reference to certain times, are reprobated by the Apostle Paul as a Jewish practice,\* a bondage under the elements of the world. And if, notwithstanding, men did, from the very first, set apart certain days, with which they associated the remembrance of the great facts of the history of Redemption, and to which the whole Christian life was to be referred, by its making them the central points of Christian fellowship, this was not by any means inconsistent with the fundamental tendency and intuition of Christianity. It was only a condescension to human weakness from the height of pure spirituality, at which even the Christian, as partaking of a double nature, cannot always maintain himself: for such condescension became the more necessary the more the fire of the first enthusiasm, the glow of the first love, abated. But as it had done in the idea of the priesthood, so here also the particularizing spirit of the Old Testament dispensation introduced a disturbing influence, by fastening itself to that which had originally sprung from the purer development of the Christian life.

When the Montanists wished to introduce, *by law*, new fasts which should be confined to *stated times*, the observations of St. Paul in his epistle to the Galatians against the Jewish observance of times were justly quoted against them; but Tertullian, the advocate of Montanism, whom we have already spoken of as standing on the boundary between two stages of the development of the church, shows himself incapable of rightly distinguishing the two positions of the Old and of the New Testament respectively; for he insists that the Judaizing spirit, reprobated by St. Paul, consisted simply in the observance of *Jewish* festivals, and not in *the mere relation of particular days (resembling those of the Jewish position)*,—whatever days they might be,—to the religious consciousness. According to his view, it would savour in no respect of Judaism if feasts which had reference to what is simply Christian were placed in *such a relation* to the religious consciousness.†

\* See my History of the Planting, &c., Bd. I., S. 215, ff.

† Against this objection of conforming to Jewish practices,—“Galaticari,” Tertullian, De jejuniis, c. 14, replies, “Galaticamur plane, si Judaicarum ceremoniarum, si legalium solennitatum observantes sumus; illas enim Apostolus dedocet, compescens veteris Testamenti in Christo sepulti perseverantiam. Quodsi nova conditio in Christo, jam nova et solennia esse debebunt.”

The *weekly* and *yearly* festivals of the Christians originated in the same fundamental idea, which formed the centre of the whole Christian life,—the idea of imitating Christ, the crucified and risen Saviour,—following Him in his death, by appropriating through faith and repentance the effects of His death, and by dying to self and to the world,—by following Him in His *resurrection*, by rising with Him, in faith and through the power which He imparts, to a new and holy life devoted to God, which, commencing here in the germ, unfolds itself to maturity in another world. Hence the *festival of joy* was *that of the resurrection*; and as the fitting preparation thereto, by repentance and mortification of the flesh, the commemoration of Christ's sufferings was kept as a day of fasting and penitence. In every week, therefore, Sunday was the festival of joy; while in preparation of it every Wednesday and Friday were consecrated as days of prayer and fasting, were consecrated to the memory of Christ's betrayal and passion. Similarly the *yearly festivals* were likewise commemorative of Christ's resurrection and of the operations of the risen and glorified Saviour, and as preparatory thereto a remembrance was kept of Christ's passion and fasting. Having presented this general view, we shall now proceed to consider, more in detail, the several weekly and yearly festivals.

The opposition to Judaism early led to the observance of Sunday in place of Saturday. The first intimation of this change is in Acts xx. 7, where we find the church assembled on the first day of the week;\* a still later one is in Rev. i. 10, where the "Lord's day" can hardly be understood of the day of judgment. So too in the catholic epistle ascribed to Barnabas, at the close of the 15th chapter, Sunday is designated as the day of rejoicing in remembrance of Christ's resurrection and ascension to heaven,† and of the new creation which then

\* See my History of the Planting, &c., Vol. I. p. 215, f. [Are there not intimations, at least, of such observance also in John xx. 19, 26; and 1 Cor. xvi. 2?—*Eng. Ed.*]

† Considering the close connection in which the resurrection of Christ and his ascension to heaven stood with each other in the Christian consciousness,—since his resurrection was regarded as but a transition point to his perfect exaltation above the region of earth in His new, glorified form of existence,—I cannot think that much stress is to be laid on the manner in which the writer of this letter expresses himself with regard to Sunday: "ἐν ᾗ καὶ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἀνέστη ἐκ νεκρῶν καὶ φανερώθηκες ἀντίθesis εἰς τοὺς



commenced; and in the epistle of Ignatius to the Magnesians it is presupposed\* that even the Jews who had embraced Christianity substituted Sunday for the Sabbath. As the Sabbath was regarded as a distinctive mark of Judaism, Sunday was looked upon as a symbol of the new life consecrated to the risen Christ and grounded in His resurrection. Sunday, as a day of joy, was distinguished by being exempt from all fasting, and by the fact that prayer was offered on this day in a standing and not in a kneeling posture, as intimating that Christ, by rising again on this day, had raised up fallen man to heaven. But as we have already observed in Tertullian a tendency to confuse the Jewish with the Christian view of festivals, so we also find in him indications of a transfer of the Jewish law of the Sabbath to the Sunday; for he seems to have regarded it as sinful† to attend to any business soever on a Sunday.

Again, in every week, Friday in particular, and also Wednesday, were specially consecrated to the remembrance of the sufferings of Christ and of the circumstances which led to them. On these days the church met together for prayer, and it was usual to fast till three o'clock in the afternoon. As yet, however, these arrangements had not any authority of law; every one observed them or not according as need or inclination prompted. By the Christians—who were fond of comparing their calling to a warfare, a militia Christi—such fasts, united with prayer, were named *stationes*,‡ as if they constituted the watches of the soldiers of Christ (the milites Christi); and these two days were called *dies stationum*.§

οὐρανούς.” Nor can I think it allowable to infer from it, either that, according to the author’s opinion, Christ’s ascension also occurred on Sunday, or that he conceived the fact to have been that Christ rose to heaven immediately after his first appearance to Mary as the risen Saviour.

\* Chap. 9: Μηκέτι σαββατίζοντες, ἀλλὰ κατὰ κυριακὴν ζωὴν ζῶντες.

† As I infer from Tertullian’s language, de orat. c. 23: Solo die dominico resurrectionis non ab isto tantum (the bowing of the knee), sed omni anxietatis habitu et officio cavere debemus, *differentes etiam negotia, ne quem diabolo locum demus*.

‡ We first find the word statio used in this sense in Hermas Pastor, l. III. Similitud. V.—it is often met with in Tertullian. Statio was the technical designation for this half-fast, as contradistinguished from the proper jejunia. Tertullian, de jejuniis, c. 14.

§ Feria quarta et sexta, probably = feria diei quartæ, sextæ; hence the signification of the word feria in the Latin of the church.

Those churches, however, which were composed of Jewish Christians,\* though with the rest they observed the festival of Sunday, still retained that also of the Sabbath; and from them the custom became general in the Eastern church of distinguishing this day as well as Sunday, by never fasting, and by standing during prayer. In the Western churches, on the other hand, and especially in the Roman, where the opposition to Judaism was strongest, a custom which had grown out of this opposition prevailed of observing the Sabbath also as a fast-day.†

\* From the language, indeed, of the passage, which has been already cited, in Ignat. ep. ad Magnes. *Οἱ ἐν παλαιοῖς πράγμασιν ἀναστραφίντες, — μηκέτι σαββατίζοντες, ἀλλὰ κατὰ κυριακὴν ζωὴν ζῶντες*, it might be inferred that the Jewish Christians had substituted Sunday for the Sabbath; which, however, in this general sense, cannot assuredly be true.

† Tertullian, de jejun. c. 14: *Quoniam vos etiam sabbatum si quando continuatis, nunquam nisi in Paschate jejunandum*. He objects, as a Montanist, to his Roman opponents, that they had deprived the Sabbath of its due honour, and sometimes continued the fast from Friday to Saturday, when properly the only exception to be made to such celebration was in the case of the passover. The same practice of continuing the Friday's fast on the Saturday, which Tertullian the Montanist here attacks, we find mentioned by Victorinus, bishop of Petabio in Pannonia (now Pettau in Steiermark), near the close of the third century, in the fragment of the History of the Creation, first published by Cave, hist. lit. He calls this continuation "superpositio jejunii." Fasting on the Sabbath appears in this case to have been a preparation for the joyful celebration of the communion on Sunday, as opposed to the Jewish festival of the Sabbath, which had been abrogated by Christ. *Hoc die solemus superponere; idcirco, ut die dominico cum gratiarum actione ad panem (the sacrament of the Lord's supper), exeamus. Et paraceve superpositio fiat, ne quid cum Judæis sabbatum observare videamus*. Galland. bibl. patr. T. IV. and Routh reliquiæ sacræ, Vol. III. pag. 237. Oxon. 1815.

The council of Elvira opposed the keeping the Sabbath as a festival by enjoining the prolongation of the Friday fast to the Sabbath; Can. 26: *Errorrem placuit corrigi, ut omni sabbati die superpositiones celebremus*. This canon may, no doubt, be differently understood by referring the phras "errorem corrigi" to something not expressly stated, but supplied by the mind, or to the following context. In the latter case the council must be understood as declaring itself expressly *opposed* to these *superpositiones*. But the analogy of the whole style of expression in the other canons of this council rather favour the first interpretation. At a later period, when the point of view from which the matter was originally regarded in the early Christian times was forgotten, and the cause of that custom in the Roman church of fasting on the Sabbath was no longer obvious, fables were invented to explain the fact, as, for example, that Peter had fasted on this day to prepare himself for the dispute with Simon Magus.



This difference in customs became striking whenever members of Eastern churches passed their Sabbaths in churches of the West. Too soon, however, were the principles of the apostolic church departed from, which, amidst all differences in outward things, had kept the unity of faith and of spirit in the bond of love. *Uniformity* in such matters was now *required*. Previously to his conversion to Montanism, Tertullian had spoken on this disputed point with Christian moderation. He said of the few advocates of the Eastern custom,\* "The Lord will bestow his grace, so that they will either yield, or else follow their own opinion without giving offence to others." As early as the beginning of the third century the learned Hippolytus was induced to write on this controversy between the Eastern and the Western churches.†

From the same point of view as the *weekly* did the first *yearly festivals* originate among the Christians. Here, however, that opposition between the communities composed of Jewish and those composed of Gentile Christians, which had such important influence on the vital development of the church as well as of its doctrines, was strongly manifested at the very beginning. The former retained, together with the whole Jewish ceremonial law, all the Jewish festivals, although they gradually ascribed to them such Christian meaning as naturally presented itself. Among the Gentile Christians, on the contrary, there were perhaps at the first no yearly festivals whatever, as may, I think, be inferred from the epistles of St. Paul.‡ If so, the same would be the case also with the churches of Asia Minor, which assuredly were founded by the Apostle Paul. And yet it was from *these churches* that the controversies in the second century respecting the time of the passover originated. They appealed to the authority of an

\* De orat. c. 23.

† Cfr. Hieronymus, ep. 72, ad Vital.

‡ The passage, 1 Corinth. v. 7, contains in no sort any allusion to a celebration of the passover in the Corinthian church which was peculiar to the Christians; but simply opposes that cleansing of the heart which is the result of faith to the *outward* Jewish celebration of the feast. Comp. my History of the Planting, &c., Vol. I. p. 230. [On this the Rev. H. J. Rose aptly observes, "But St. Paul, 1 Cor. xvi. 8, says, But I will tarry at *Ephesus* until *Pentecost*. Now this is worth observing: he is writing to a church among the *Heathen*, and yet reckons by the feast. May we not suppose from this that the heathen converts made this season a solemn time also, and reckoned their years in some degree by it?—*Eng. Ed.*]

ancient usage introduced by the Apostle St. John. Perhaps, therefore, the truth may be that a change took place in these churches, after the times of St. Paul, in the particular form of worship, by the introduction of the annual feast, which might be derived from the Apostle St. John, whose long residence in Minor Asia must have had a lasting influence on the state of the churches there. Now, supposing this, we need not look long for its cause. It is probable that, as this apostle had, previously to his coming there, been accustomed to celebrate the Jewish annual festival, and as the feast of the passover, as recalling the great facts of which he had been an eye-witness, must have had a peculiar significancy to his mind, he may have introduced its celebration when he took up his permanent residence among these churches. This hypothesis will serve to explain the observance in this region of the chronology of the Jewish passover.

Now in modern times it has become a prevalent opinion \* that the paschal supper which the Christians of Asia Minor observed in remembrance of the last supper of Christ was the point by which they determined the time of Easter. But it may be questioned whether the most trustworthy and the oldest document on this controversy—the letter of Polycrates bishop of Ephesus†—favours this view.‡ From the language

\* The first occasion to which was given by the Dissertation published by myself in the 2nd Hefte des Kirchenhistorischen Archiv's von Vater, J. 1823. See the history of the treatises on this subject,—a subject rendered obscure and difficult by a deficiency of ancient documents and the ambiguity of the term *Pascha*,—in Illgen's Zeitschrift für die historische Theologie, Bd. II. 4tes Stück. J. 1832, by Dr. Rettberg.

† Euseb. l. V. c. 24. The fragments (preserved in the *Chronicon paschale Alexandrinum*) of a work, by Apollinaris of Hierapolis, on the feast of the Passover, of which I have made much use in the above-mentioned Dissertation, is, to say the least, suspicious; in the first place, no such work is mentioned in the ancient lists of the writings of Apollinaris, in Eusebius, in Jerome, and in Photius; and, secondly, it were singular if in the district where he wrote the usage of the church in Asia Minor was not followed.

‡ Polycrates, in the letter referred to, says of his predecessors, Πάντες ἐτήρησαν τὴν ἡμέραν τῆς τεσσαρεσκαίδεκάτης τοῦ πάσχα κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον. This, to say the least, is singularly expressed, if it is to be understood as referring only to the paschal supper to be held on the evening of this day, which supper, according to the gospel narrative of Christ's last paschal supper, was believed should be held on the eve of the Jewish feast of the passover, on the fourteenth day of the month Nisan. Afterwards it is said,



of this document it would seem rather to follow that in the churches of Asia Minor the Christians who followed the tradition of St. John went on the supposition that the 14th day of the month Nisan must be regarded as the day of Christ's passion. Hence they believed that this day ought for ever to be set apart for the commemoration of Christ's passion, especially since the paschal lamb, which was slain by the Jews on this day, was considered a foretype of the sacrifice of Christ.\* At all events, however, one point is settled, that in Asia Minor the paschal feast was kept according to the Jewish reckoning. Consequently it would occasionally happen that the commemoration of Christ's passion would fall on another day of the week than Friday, and that of His resurrection on a different day than Sunday. When, on the other hand, in the course of the second century, annual feasts were everywhere observed in the Western churches, men proceeded from a different point of view in determining them. Following the same method as had been observed in settling the weekly festivals, Christians held it necessary that a Friday should always be set apart to the memory of Christ's passion, and a Sunday to that of His resurrection.

This difference of custom existed at first without such a mere external thing being deemed of sufficient importance to be made a matter of dispute; it was still kept in mind that the kingdom of God consists neither in meat nor drink, nor any other kind of external action.

This difference, together with several others, between the church of Asia Minor and the church of Rome, first came into discussion in the year 162, when Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, made a visit to Anicetus, bishop of Rome.† Polycarp ap-

Πάντοτε τὴν ἡμέραν ἡγαγον οἱ συγγενεῖς μου, ὅταν τῶν Ἰουδαίων ὁ λαὸς ἤσεν τὴν ζύμην. What sense would this afford if the subject of discourse were the paschal supper? It is, in fact, evident of itself that the *paschal supper* could be held only on the day when the Jews removed the leaven from their houses. This would be *idem per idem*. On the other hand, everything is consistent if we suppose that the writer is speaking of a festival in *remembrance of Christ's passion*, on the fourteenth of the month Nisan. The proof here appealed to is the gospel, by which may be understood either the evangelical history generally, or the gospel of John in particular.

\* Comp. Justin M. Dial. c. Tryph. Jud. f. 259, and f. 338, ed. Colon.

† At any rate, if we may judge from the language of Irenæus, cited by Eusebius, the object of Polycarp's journey to Rome was not to settle the disputes respecting Easter. No disputes on this question had as yet

pealed to the circumstance that he had himself observed such a passover with the Apostle John, whose disciple he was. Anicetus alleged that his predecessors (in a church consisting of Gentile Christians who followed St. Paul) had introduced nothing of that sort.\* But as it was not supposed that the apostles had entirely coincided in such outward matters, or that they would have considered uniformity in such things to be necessary, it was thought that a difference on these points might be allowed to continue without prejudice to the fellowship and unity of Christians. As a token that the bond of Christian brotherhood was not disturbed by such, and, as it seems, other still more important points of difference, Anicetus permitted Polycarp to preside in the church in place of himself at the celebration of the Lord's supper.

If the two books which, about the year 171, the bishop Melito, of Sardis, wrote upon Easter,† referred to this dispute, it must about this time have broken out anew. However, it cannot be proved that the work contained any reference of that sort. The typical explanation of the Jewish passover might have led to the composition of such a work, independently of this controversy.

But about 190 A.D., when Victor was bishop of the Roman church,‡ the controversy broke out afresh. On the one side

arisen; and the conversation upon it seems to have been introduced incidentally while they were speaking of other points of difference between the churches. Neither is it by any means clear, although it is possible, that the object of the journey was to discuss those other differences. More importance has been sometimes attributed to this visit than it can be proved historically to have possessed.

\* The matter is obscure, as we have in our hands only a fragment of the letter of Irenæus apart from the context. Perhaps even then there was not as yet any yearly feast in the Roman church; perhaps the difference at that time had reference to this very point,—the conflict between the ancient rites according to St. Paul, and the more recent ones according to St. John. I speak here only by way of conjecture.

† Euseb. l. IV. c. 26.

‡ From the fact that Irenæus, in his letter to Victor, holds up only those Roman bishops who preceded Soter as patterns of toleration, I formerly inferred that the change had taken place under the latter; but if we observe how the phrases in Irenæus, οἱ (πρὸ) Σωτῆρος πρεσβύτεροι and οἱ πρὸ σου πρεσβύτεροι, answer to each other, it becomes evident that no stress is to be laid on the former. Irenæus means simply to say that difference, and withal that tolerance, did not first begin under the last bishops, but existed even before Soter.



stood the church of Rome, supported by the churches of Cæsarea in Palestine, of Jerusalem, of Tyre, and of Alexandria; on the other were the churches of Asia Minor, headed by Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus.

The Roman bishop, actuated by that hierarchical spirit which we have already seen traces of in the Roman church,\* excommunicated the churches of Asia Minor on account of this trivial dispute; but this unchristian proceeding did not fail to encounter decided resistance in an age when the gospel spirit still survived. Irenæus, in the name of the churches at Lyons and Vienne, wrote to Victor, sharply rebuking his conduct. He holds up to the shame of Victor the example of his predecessor, Anicetus, and declared to him, "Notwithstanding these differences, we live together in peace, and our disagreement in regulating the fasts serves only to make our unity of faith the more clearly evident." In the same letter, or another occasioned by the same controversy, he says, "The apostles have directed us to let no man judge us in meat or in drink, or in respect of a holy day, or of the new moon, or of Sabbath days. Why then these disputes, why these divisions? We observe fasts, but it is with the sour leaven of malice and wickedness, for we rend the church of God; we observe externals, but we omit the weightier matters of faith and love. We learn, however, from the prophets, that such feasts and such fasts are an abomination to the Lord."

As Friday was customarily considered a day of penitence and fasting preparatory to the celebration of the Resurrection on Sunday, so in these churches, where one Friday in the year was particularly consecrated to the commemoration of the passion of Christ, and one Sunday to that of His resurrection, it was usual to make this Friday a day of penitence and fasting preparatory to the greatest Christian festival, the celebration on Easter Sunday of Christ's resurrection. With respect, however, to the duration of this season of fasting, nothing was determined. An imitation of our Lord's temptation for forty days in the wilderness led in some places to the extension of this fast to forty hours, out of which there afterwards arose the forty days',† or Quadragesimal fast.

The festival of the Resurrection was followed by that of

\* See above, p. 298.

† Irenæus, in Euseb. l. V. c. 24.

Pentecost (Whitsuntide). Its object was to commemorate the risen and glorified Christ, as He revealed Himself to the faithful, and ultimately manifested His self-subsistent participation of the divine life, by the effusion of the Holy Spirit. All this, as the sum of the operations of the ascended and glorified Redeemer, was embraced in this continuous festival of fifty days. It must be evident from this how closely connected in the Christian consciousness at this period were the conceptions of Christ's resurrection and ascension.\* The entire period was observed as Sunday; that is, there was no fasting throughout the whole; prayers were made standing and not kneeling; it was perhaps also the case (in many of the churches at least) that the people assembled daily and celebrated the communion.† Afterwards, two special events—the ascension of Christ, and the effusion of the Holy Spirit—were selected out of all those commemorated in this whole period, and to them the celebration of Pentecost was henceforth confined.

*These feasts*, as it would appear from the passage cited from

\* This mode of contemplating the subject was still adopted also by Origen, and it accounts for the way in which he places in juxtaposition with the weekly feasts, the *παρασκευαί* and *κυριακαί*, the yearly feasts, the *πάσχα* and the *πεντηκοστή*, regarding the feast of the Resurrection as the point at which the feast of Pentecost began. Hence he observes, "Whoever in sincerity of heart can say, God has raised us up and set us with Him in heavenly places, celebrates constantly the feast of Pentecost." (Ὁ δυνάμενος μετὰ ἀληθείας λέγειν, συνανέστημεν τῷ Χριστῷ, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ συνήγειρε καὶ συνεκάθισεν ἡμᾶς ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις ἐν Χριστῷ, αὐτὸ ἐστὶν ἐν ταῖς τῆς πεντηκοστῆς ἡμέραις.) Orig. c. Cels. l. VIII. c. 22.

† Tertullian, de orat. c. 23, when he says that men abstained from worldly business on Sunday, and afterwards transfers all the solemnities of Sunday to the Pentecost, would almost lead us to infer that the former practice also was observed through the whole of Pentecost; which, however, is hardly credible. De Idololatria, c. 14, wishing to keep Christians from taking any part in the heathen festivals, he says, Excerpe singulas sollennitates nationum, Pentecosten implere non poterunt. The first trace of a limitation of the Pentecost to one day is to be found perhaps in the 43rd canon of the council of Elvira. This certainly most obscure canon seems naturally to admit of being understood as implying that some had selected out of the whole time of Pentecost the feast of Ascension for peculiar veneration. On the other hand, by the Pentecost the council understands only the feast of the Effusion of the Holy Spirit, and therefore requires that it be celebrated fifty days after Easter. It charges the former, who had but made a wrong application of the name of Pentecost, with departing from the authority of scripture. Ut cuncti diem Pentecostes post Pascha celebremus, non quadragesimam, nisi quinquagesimam.



Origen, were the only ones generally observed at this date. That fundamental view of the whole Christian life, which referred everything to Christ's sufferings, resurrection, and glorious ascension, and both the accommodation of and the opposition to the Jewish festivals, were reasons why these should be the only general festivals. The idea of a *birthday* festival was far from the minds of the Christians generally at this period; they regarded the second birth as man's true birth. With the *birth of the Saviour*, indeed, the case must have been somewhat different. By Him human nature was to be sanctified from its earliest period. But this fact would not at first present itself very strongly to the minds of the earlier Christians, so many of whom when they embraced Christianity were advanced in years. It was, moreover, only by degrees that Christianity could pass into all the relations of domestic life. Besides, it was, in truth, unknown what time ought to be fixed for the celebration of the Nativity, since nothing definite was ascertained respecting the date of his birth. The case was entirely different with those more ancient annual festivals.

Yet even in this period we find some trace, we think, of the festival of *Christmas*. The history of it is closely connected with the history of another kindred festival, that of the Epiphany, the *manifestation of Jesus* in his character of Messiah on His consecration to the office at His baptism by John, and of the beginning of His public ministry, called afterwards the *ἐορτὴ τῶν ἐπιφανιῶν, τῆς ἐπιφανείας τοῦ Χριστοῦ*. We find in later times that these festivals spread in opposite directions; that of Christmas extending itself from the West to the East, and the latter from the East to the West.\* Clement of

\* The feast of Epiphany, considered as the festival of Christ's baptism, stood in high consideration towards the close of the fourth century at Antioch, while the introduction of the Christmas festival, which came from the West, met there with much opposition. Several of the Eastern churches (among whom the festival of Christmas was first introduced in the last part of the fourth century, or still later, while the feast of Christ's baptism had been longer known) afterwards united both feasts together, just as in the Western churches a somewhat different meaning was given to the new feast of Epiphany, which came to them from the East. The Donatists refused to adopt the feast of Epiphany, considering it as an innovation coming from the *Eastern church*. Quia nec orientali ecclesie, ubi apparuit illa stella, communicant. Augustini Sermo, 202, s. 2. These are only preliminary remarks, introduced here in order to

Alexandria simply observes that the Gnostic sect of the Basilidians in his time kept the latter festival at Alexandria. The idea, however, can scarcely be admitted, that this sect invented the festival, though they may have been interested in observing it on doctrinal grounds; for the catholic church would never have adopted it from the Gnostics. The Gnostics had most probably borrowed it from Jewish Christian churches in Palestine or Syria. It probably originated with Jewish Christians; for to their peculiar mode of thinking, this moment in the life of Jesus must have appeared most important. The Gnostics afterwards gave it their own interpretation. Clement speaks, at the same time, of individuals who were disposed to calculate not only the *year* but also the *day* of the Nativity, and indeed seems to censure such inquiries as idle and unprofitable, in which, moreover, it was impossible to arrive at any certainty. He does not, indeed, say that they kept the day which they thus attempted to determine, as a festival; yet it is probable that the day which they took so much pains to reckon, they also solemnly observed; and the general tenor of the passage in Clement would seem to indicate that this was his meaning.\* Moreover, he could not have been alluding to the Gnostics, of whom he afterwards speaks, for the festival of Christmas stood in direct contradiction to *their* system. Thus these two feasts answer to two stages of Christian intuition, a lower and a higher; to that which attached itself immediately to Judaism, and to the Christian stage carried out to an independent development; the view of Jesus as the anointed of the Holy Spirit, armed with divine powers for his work as the Messiah, and of Jesus as the God-man, the Word become flesh, whose humanity was from the beginning filled with the divine essence. We now pass to the consideration of the several parts of Christian worship.

#### 4. *The several parts of Christian Worship.*

The nature of the single acts of Christian worship will be evident from what we have remarked respecting its essence

confirm the conjecture advanced above; the subject will be resumed in the following period.

\* Clemens Stromat. l. I. f. 340: Εἰσὶ δὲ οἱ περιεργότερόν τῇ γενέσει τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν οὐ μόνον τὸ ἔτος, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν ἡμέραν προστιθέντες· οἱ δὲ ἀπὸ Βασιλείδου καὶ τοῦ βαπτίσματος αὐτοῦ τὴν ἡμέραν ἐορτάζουσιν.



generally. As the common elevation of the heart and spirit to God, the illumination of the spirit conjointly with the sanctification of the heart, was the end of the whole religion, so instruction and edification by the common study of the divine word and common prayer, constituted, from the first, a principal part of Christian worship. And the form of this, like that of the constitution of the church, resembled probably that of the Jewish synagogues, where also the spiritual religious element predominated.\* As in the synagogues of the Jews the reading of portions from the Old Testament formed the basis of religious instruction, a similar practice passed into the Christian assemblies. The Old Testament was first read, particularly the prophetic parts of it, as referring to the Messiah; then the gospels, and finally the apostolical epistles.

The reading of the scriptures was of the greater consequence since it was desirable that every Christian should be familiar with them; and yet, in consequence of the rarity and costliness of manuscripts, and the poverty of the great majority of the Christians, or perhaps because all could not read, it was idle to think of placing the Bible itself in the hands of all. The frequent *hearing* the word must therefore, in the case of many, be a substitute for *reading* it. The scriptures were read in the *language* that all could understand. This, in most of the countries belonging to the Roman empire, was either the Greek or the Latin. Various translations of the Bible into Latin made their appearance at a very early period; since every one who had a slight knowledge of Greek felt a desire to make the word of God his own in his native tongue.† In places where the Greek or the Latin language was only understood by a part of the community, the educated class, while the rest were acquainted only with the ancient dialect of their country (as was the case in many cities of Egypt and Syria), the church appointed interpreters, like those in the Jewish synagogues,‡ who on the spot translated what had been read into the provincial dialect, in order to make it intelligible to all.§

\* See my History of the Planting, &c., Vol. I. p. 39.

† Augustin. de doctrina christiana, l. II. c. 11.

‡ The סֹפְרֵי תֹרָה, Dragomans.

§ Ἐρμηνευταὶ γλώσσης εἰς γλῶσσαν, ἢ ἐν ταῖς ἀναγνώσεσιν, ἢ ἐν ταῖς προσομιλίαις. Epiphani. exposit. fid. Cathol. c. 21. Procopius, the martyr in the persecution of Dioclesian, united in his own person, at

As early as the third century (to judge from the complete liturgies of the fourth which are known to us) it was the practice for the deacons, before the Anagnost began to read, to exhort the community, in a certain customary form of words, to attention and devotion in listening to the divine word.\*

The reading of the scriptures was followed, as in the Jewish synagogues, by short, and originally very *simple addresses*, in familiar language, the momentary effusions of the heart, which gave an exposition and application of what had been read. On this point Justin Martyr thus expresses himself:† “The ruler of the church delivers a word of exhortation, and incites the people to imitate the good examples they had heard.” It was among the Greeks, among whom a taste for rhetoric prevailed, that the *sermon* first began to take a wider scope, and to assume an important place among the acts of worship.‡

*Singing*, also, passed from the Jewish service into the Christian church. The Apostle St. Paul even exhorts the primitive churches to sing spiritual songs. For this purpose were used either the psalms of the Old Testament, or *hymns composed expressly for this object*, especially hymns of praise and of thanks to God and to Christ. These Pliny speaks of as customary among the Christians of his time. In the controversies with the Unitarians (at the end of the second and the beginning of the third centuries) the *hymns* were appealed to in which from the earliest times Christ had been worshipped

Scythopolis in Palestine, the offices of Anagnost, exorcist, and interpreter (from the Greek into Syriac). See his Acta.

\* As we also see from the words of Commodian against the speaking, particularly of the female sex, in the church:—

Buccina præconum clamat, lectore legente,  
Ut pateant aures, et tu magis obstruis illas.

L. c. c. 76.

† Apolog. II.

‡ When Sozomen, hist. eccles. l. VII. c. 19, who wrote in the first half of the fifth century, says that the practice of preaching did not exist in the Roman church, the remark could in no case have reference to the *early times*; but supposing the statement is to be depended upon, it would simply amount to this, that by the multitude of outward ceremonies and liturgical pomp the sermon was finally pushed into the background. But the fact may have been that this Eastern writer was deceived by false accounts from the West. And the mistake may have arisen from observing that the sermon in the Roman church did not occupy so important a place in public worship as it did in the Greek church.



as God. The power of church music on the heart was soon acknowledged. Accordingly, all those who, like Bardasanes or Paul of Samosata, were desirous of propagating peculiar opinions of their own, endeavoured to spread them by means of hymns.

The *visible church* required *visible* signs for the spiritual facts on which its inward essence rests. Christ therefore, who intended to found a visible church, instituted *two outward signs*, as symbols of the invisible fellowship between Him, the *Head* of the spiritual body, and its members, the believers, as well as of the union of these members not only *with Himself*, but *with one another*. They were to be visible means of representing the invisible heavenly benefits communicated by Him to the members of this body. And with the believing use of these signs, furnished to the *outward senses*, was to be connected the enjoyment in the inward man of that fellowship and of those heavenly benefits. As in the whole of Christianity and the whole Christian life there is nothing which stands separate and by itself, but all, radiating from a common centre, forms one whole, so, in the present case, what is represented by these outward signs was to be something which should permeate the whole inward life of the Christian, something which from one single moment of that life should diffuse itself over the whole of it, and again be specially awakened by other single moments, and carried still farther onward by them. Such was *baptism*, the sign of the first admission into communion with the Redeemer and with His church, the first appropriation of the benefits which He has bestowed on mankind—the forgiveness, viz., of sins and the inward union of life thence resulting, and the participation in a divine sanctifying spirit. Such too was the *Lord's supper*, the sign of a constantly advancing perseverance in this fellowship and in the appropriation and enjoyment of these benefits; the two representing the essentials of the whole inner life of the Christian, in its first rise and its progressive development. The whole peculiar spirit of the Christian worship stamped itself distinctly on the mode in which these outward signs of divine realities were administered; and the mode of their administration again reacted strongly upon the character of the worship. The connection of the momentous things these outward signs represented with the whole of the Christian

life, the union of the inward and divine with the outward rites, were present to the lively Christian feelings of the early believers. It was, however, a source of great practical mischief, as we formerly observed with regard to the doctrine of the church, that men neglected duly to separate and distinguish in their conceptions what was connected together in their feelings. It was from this source that proceeded the outward conception, not merely of the church, but also of those symbols which were so closely connected with the being of the church. And one kind of outward conception reacted upon the other.

To speak first of baptism: At the beginning, when it was important that the church should rapidly extend itself, those (among the Jews) who confessed their belief in *Jesus* as the *Messiah*, or (among the Gentiles) their belief in one God, and in *Jesus* as the *Messiah*, were, as appears from the New Testament, immediately baptized. In course of time, however, it was thought necessary that those who wished to be received into the church should be prepared by a careful instruction and a strict examination.\* This class of persons

\* I cannot see any good or sufficient grounds for the assertion advanced by Dr. Rothe in his interesting tract (*De disciplinæ arcani, quæ dicitur, in ecclesia Christiana origipe*. Heidelberg, 1841), that the instruction and examination of catechumens related in the first place to matters of practice only, and that an important change took place when, at a later period, the instruction and examination were directed to matters of theory. Both were from the beginning united together, as Christianity required. This is clear also from the passage in the greater Apology of Justin Martyr, s. 61, where he says of those who are preparing themselves for baptism, "Ὅσοι ἂν πειθῶσι καὶ πιστεύωσιν ἀληθῆ ταῦτα τὰ ὑφ' ἡμῶν διδασκόμενα καὶ λεγόμενα εἶναι καὶ βιοῦν οὕτως δύνασθαι ὑπισχνῶνται. Here instruction in doctrine is assuredly presupposed, and the corresponding conduct of life derived from it, both being supposed to be so united with each other, that those who wished to receive baptism should declare themselves convinced of the truth of the doctrines they had been taught, and bind themselves to rule their lives by them.—the very method of uniting doctrine and practice which in the instruction of catechumens must prevail at all periods. It is beyond my power to conceive what conclusion can be drawn from the words of Celsus, l. III. c. 50, with regard to the instruction of catechumens; for these words are totally foreign to the subject, having reference simply to the mode which the Christians adopted of seeking first to gain access to the uneducated, to slaves and youth, and bring them over to Christianity. Neither has the mutual relation which subsists between Clement's two works (the *Pædagogus* and the *Stromata*) anything to do with the present subject. It answers to the relation of the *πίστις* to the *γνώσις*; among the Alexan-



were denominated catechumens (*κατηχούμενοι, ἀκροαταί*, auditores or audientes). By these appellations were designated all such as were receiving their primary instruction in Christianity, and who as such were only permitted to hear the scriptures read and the word preached, without being allowed to partake of the holy communion. The length of probation must have been determined by the different conditions of individuals; yet the council of Elvira fixed the period generally at two years. Originally there was but one common name for all who had not as yet received baptism, but were in the state of probation and preparation. But as different stages and gradations were here distinguished, these were also designated by particular names. Accordingly in Origen we find the catechumens separated into two classes. 1. Those who were receiving private instruction, and 2. Those who were admitted to the meetings of the church, and who were immediately preparing for baptism.\*

For the private instruction of these catechumens no distinct office was instituted in the church. At Carthage the duty devolved, after a period of probation, on some individual who had distinguished himself among the church readers, who thereupon assumed the title of catechist. At Alexandria, where it often happened that men of education, even learned men, and persons accustomed to philosophical speculations, applied for instruction in Christianity, it was necessary that the catechists should be men of liberal education, and able to satisfy the doubts and objections of heathens, and to meet them on their own ground. Able and learned laymen were therefore here selected; and this class of catechists led afterwards to the

drians; and the Gnosis assuredly could not be taught to catechumens. Instruction in the fundamental doctrines of Christianity is quite another thing.

\* Origen, c. Cels. l. III. c. 51, says that to those who wished to embrace Christianity instruction was first imparted privately (by this circumstance he explains the name *ἀκροαταί*). When they had sufficiently attested the sincerity of their purpose of leading a Christian life, they were introduced into the church; *τοτηνικαὶς αὐτοὺς εἰσαγούσιν, ἰδίᾳ μὲν ποιήσαντες τάγμα τῶν ἀρετῇ ἀρχομένων καὶ εἰσαγομένων καὶ οὐδέπω τὸ σύμβολον τοῦ ἀποικαθάρθαι ἀνεληφότων*. The last distinction evidently shows that they ought to be distinguished from the baptized, who are afterwards spoken of. It was only of the moral oversight of the baptized members of the church that he is afterwards speaking. And so Origen describes, not three, but two classes of catechumens.

formation of an important theological school among the Christians at Alexandria.\*

Even in the New Testament some traces of a *confession of faith*, to be made at baptism, are to be found.† Such confessions of faith were afterwards enlarged so as to be protests against Jews, heathens, and heretics. They were intended to embrace the essentials of Christianity, on which all churches were agreed. It was believed that the doctrine contained in these creeds proceeded from the apostles; that it was the doctrine which they set forth both by word of mouth and by their writings; but it was by no means the opinion of the first ages that the apostles had drawn up any such confession. In the former sense it was called the *κήρυγμα ἀποστολικόν*, the *παράδοσις ἀποστολική*; a misunderstanding of this phrase afterwards gave birth to the fiction that the apostles had verbally composed such a creed.‡ This formula of confession was in these ages designated by the distinctive term of *Symbolum*. It may be a question whether this use of the word *Symbolum* was adopted in its general meaning of “a sign,” to signify that the words of the confession were a characteristic, representative sign of the faith, or in its particular application as the *σύμβολον στρατιωτικόν*, the *tessera militaris*: to indicate that the confession was, as it were, the watchword of the miles Christi, communicated to every one on his admission into the militia Christi. So far as we can trace the history of the phrase, the first seems to be the more probable supposition; for where the word *Symbolum* first occurs in connection with baptism, it has only that general signification.§

\* More on this whole subject hereafter, in the section relating to the Alexandrian school.

† See 1 Pet. iii. 21.—1 Tim. vi. 12, is not so clear, as this might perhaps refer to a profession voluntarily made by Timothy, on the impulse of his own feelings, on a special occasion, when he was chosen and consecrated as a missionary to the heathen.

‡ Rufin. exposit. symbol. apostol.

§ As, for example, where Tertullian, de pœnitentia, c. 6, says that baptism, which by its nature should be a *symbolum vitæ*, becomes to those who receive it without the right disposition a *symbolum mortis*. So in his work, contr. Marcion. l. V. c. 1, *symbolum* is used by him as equivalent to mark or sign generally. So in the letter of Firmilianus of Cæsarea, where the “*symbolum trinitatis*” is expressly distinguished from the confession of faith, and employed as a designation of the formula of baptism (*Baptismus*), cui nec *symbolum trinitatis* nec interro-



The word *σύμβολον*, *symbolum*, with its pregnancy of meanings, would not fail to give occasion to many different religious allusions and applications. But the one that soon became predominant was that which agreed with the favourite comparison among the early Christians between their vocation and a military service (*militia*). In the Alexandrian church, however, where a taste prevailed for tracing analogies with the heathen mysteries, and sometimes, indeed, in a way but little suited to the simple character of the gospel, the term was compared to the password of the initiated.\* Others again insisted on another meaning of the word "*Symbolum*," by which it stood for a commercial partnership; as if the pledge of a spiritual fellowship was the thing designed by it.† Again, the legend recorded by Rufin,‡ which ascribed the authorship of a creed to the apostles, introduced the notion that this confession had been formed, article by article, by contributions from each of the apostles, the term *σύμβολον*, *συμβολή*, being for this purpose taken in the sense of contribution.

This confession was put into the hands of the catechumens as containing the essentials of Christianity. Many who, after much inquiry and the study of different religious works, and reading the scriptures for themselves, had been led to embrace the faith, did not of course need it to impart to them a knowledge of the elements of Christianity. In their case it could only serve as a means of convincing them that the church which they wished to join agreed in its doctrine with the holy scriptures, out of which they themselves had already derived a knowledge of the faith. Thus Clement of Alexandria invites the heathen to convince themselves what the true Christian doctrine is, by searching the scriptures, where it was to be

*gatio legitima et ecclesiastica defuit.* Again, ep. 76, Cyprian, ad Magnum: "*eodem symbolo baptizare*," to baptize with the same formula. Perhaps this word was originally nothing more than a designation of the formula of baptism, and became subsequently transferred to the confession of faith.

\* *Stromat.* l. V. f. 582. The *λοῦτρον* compared with the *καθαρσίαις* of the pagan mysteries. In the designation, however, "*φωτισμός*," we cannot find any reference to the mysteries; for this term or illustration is assuredly derived from the New Testament.

† Augustin, *Sermo*, 212: *Symbolum inter se faciunt mercatores, quorum societas pacto fidei teneatur; et vestra societas est commercium spiritualium.*

‡ In his *expositio in symbolum apostolorum.*

found, if only they would but apply their mental powers to distinguish the true from the plausible, the doctrine really derived from the scriptures from that which merely in appearance attached itself to them.\*

Others, however, first obtained their knowledge of Christianity from the confession of faith and the instruction imparted in connection with it, without being able, till afterwards, to compare with the scriptures what they had thus originally learned from human tradition. It was of these that the Gnostic Heracleon remarked,† “They are led first to believe in the Saviour by the testimony of men; but when they come to his own words they believe no longer on the ground of human testimony alone, but for the sake of the truth itself;” and in reference to the same class Clement of Alexandria says,‡ “The first saving change from heathenism is *faith*, that is, a compendious knowledge of all that is necessary to salvation. On this foundation is built the *Gnosis*, which is a solid demonstration of what has been received by faith by proofs from the doctrine of our Lord.” Others, who were wholly uneducated, and unable to read, could only learn from the mouth of others, and could never come of themselves to the very fountain of God’s word; yet the divine doctrine which they imbibed from the lips of others proved itself independently to be a divine power in their hearts. Where the word but once found admission, an independent Christian consciousness was capable of being thereby awakened. “Many of us,” says Clement of Alexandria, “have received the divine doctrine, without the use of writings, by the power of God through faith.”§

The few words of this creed needed not, of course, to be communicated in *writing*. They were to pass into the heart of the catechumen; to pass from the word of mouth into his life; to be pronounced by him as his own deep conviction. Was it wished to attach some higher meaning to this so na-

\* Stromat. l. VII. f. 754 et 55: Δι’ αὐτῶν τῶν γραφῶν ἐκμανθάνειν ἀποδεικτικῶς.—Διακρίνειν τε τῇ καταληπτικῇ θείῳ (comprehending intuition), καὶ τῷ κυριωτάτῳ λογισμῷ (right thinking), τὸ ἀληθὲς ἀπὸ τοῦ φαινομένου. † Orig. Tom. XIII. in Joann. s. 52.

‡ Stromat. l. VII. f. 732, Lit. D.

§ Stromat. l. I. f. 319: Οἱ δὲ καὶ ἄνευ γραμμάτων δυνάμει τὸν περὶ Θεοῦ διὰ πίστεως περιλήψαμεν λόγον.



tural custom of teaching orally the creed? The interpretation most readily presenting itself was, that the Christian doctrine could not come to men from without, by the medium of letters, but must be written in their hearts by the Spirit of God, and propagate itself there as a living principle. Jer. xxxi. 33.\* In later times a love of mystery quite alien to the simple spirit of the gospel (which first arose in the Alexandrian church out of a leaning towards an accommodation with the pagan mysteries and from the influence of the Neo-Platonic mysticism) gave to this custom the meaning that the most sacred things ought not to be intrusted to writing, lest they should be produced among the uninitiated, and thereby become profaned;† and this was asserted to be its meaning even while the scriptures, the holiest traditions of the divine, might come into the hands of every heathen, and while the apologists felt no scruples in bringing before them the most sacred doctrines of Christianity!

This confession of faith was made by the catechumens at baptism, in answers to distinct questions. ‡

With the oral confession of faith was also connected the declaration of a moral engagement. The baptismal engagement was looked upon in the following light:—The candidate for baptism was supposed to be leaving the kingdom of sin, of darkness, of Satan, which, as a heathen devoted to his lusts, he had hitherto served, and to be entering the kingdom of God

\* So Augustin, Sermo 212: *Hujus rei significandæ causa, audiendo symbolum discitur, nec in tabulis vel in aliqua materia, sed in corde scribitur.*

† The like play and parade about mysteries, to which more importance came to be attached than they originally possessed, led afterwards to the invention of the obscure, vague, and unhistorical idea of a disciplina arcani, of which, from its very vagueness and want of foundation, men could make whatever they pleased.

‡ According to the most natural interpretation of 1 Pet. iii. 21, it refers to the question proposed at baptism. Ἐπερώτημα, metonymice for the pledge in answer to the questions. Tertullian De corona milit. c. 3: *Amplius aliquid respondentem, quam Dominus in evangelio determinavit.* Again, Tertullian, De resurrect. c. 48, respecting baptism: *Anima responsione sancitur.* The counsel of eighty-seven bishops in the time of Cyprian, respecting these questions: "*Sacramentum interrogare*" (*sacramentum* is here equivalent to *doctrina sacra*). In a letter of Dionysius of Alexandria, cited in Eusebius, l. VII. c. 9: Ἐπερωτήσεις καὶ ἀποκρίσεις. Cyprian, ep. 76, ad Magnum, cites one of these questions: *Credis remissionem peccatorum et vitam æternam per sanctam ecclesiam?*

and of Christ. He was, therefore, solemnly to renounce all fellowship with that kingdom of which he had before been a subject. Giving his hand to the bishop, he pledged himself \* to renounce the devil and all his pomps ; meaning thereby particularly the pagan shows and things of the like nature—and his angels—an expression probably based on the notion that the heathen gods were evil spirits who had seduced mankind.† In accordance with the favourite comparison already alluded to, this pledge was regarded as the oath of the Christian soldier, the *sacramentum militiæ christianæ*, whereby he bound himself to live and fight as a *miles Dei et Christi*.

This form of renunciation, which we meet with in the second century, should be distinguished from the *exorcism*, which could not have sprung so early out of the prevailing mode of thinking in Christian antiquity. It is true the idea of a deliverance from the dominion of the evil spirit in a moral and spiritual respect, of a separation from the kingdom of evil, and of a communication by the new birth of a divine life which should triumph over the principle of evil, belongs to the original and essential ideas of Christianity. But in fact the whole rite of baptism was nothing less than a sensible representation of this idea. There was therefore no need for adding any separate act to denote or to realize that which the whole act of baptism was intended to denote, and truly and effectually to represent to the believer. The case was different with the formula of renunciation. This, like the confession of faith, had reference to what the candidate was bound, on his part, to do, in order to continue to enjoy the benefit of baptism. As in Christianity faith and practice are closely joined, so the renunciation immediately followed the confession. We do not therefore in the second century find as yet any trace of such a form of exorcism. But the tendency to the outward, the inclination to the magical, the fondness for pomp and display, caused that *those* forms of exorcism which had been employed in the case of the *energumens* or demoniacally possessed should be introduced in the baptism of all heathens. Perhaps, too, this change had some connection with the fact that exor-

\* According to Tertullian, *de corona milit.* c. 3, this happened twice ; first, before he went to baptism,—perhaps on his first admission to the church assemblies ; next, at baptism itself.

† Ἀποτάσσειν τῷ διαβόλῳ καὶ τῇ περὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ τοῖς ἀγγέλοις αὐτοῦ.



cism, which in earlier times was a free *charisma*, had become generally a lifeless mechanical act, attached to a distinct office in the church. In the apostolical constitutions we find neither the one nor the other. The first unequivocal trace of exorcism in baptism is found in the acts of the council of eighty-five or eighty-seven bishops which met at Carthage in the year 256.\*

In respect to the manner of baptizing: in conformity with the original institution and the original import of the symbol, it was generally administered by immersion, as a sign of total baptism into the Holy Spirit, of being entirely penetrated by His grace.† It was only in the case of the sick that any exception was made; then, if the exigency required it, baptism was administered by sprinkling. Many superstitious persons,‡ clinging to the outward form, imagined that such baptism by sprinkling was not fully valid; and accordingly they distinguished those who had been so baptized by the term *clinici*. Cyprian protested strongly against this delusion.§ “The breast of the believer,” he says, “is washed in one way, but in another is it that the soul of man is cleansed by the merits of faith. In the sacraments of salvation, the divine thing, though outwardly abridged, when necessity compels and God gives permission, bestows all that it implies on the faithful. || And even if any one really believes that these persons have obtained nothing because they have been merely *sprinkled* with the water of salvation, let not the latter be deceived into thinking that, in case they recover from their sickness, they ought to be baptized over again. But if those who have once been consecrated by the baptism of the church cannot again

\* The North African bishop Cæcilius, of Bilta, by his vote in this case, goes on the supposition that exorcism belonged essentially to the whole act of baptism. So too the vote of the fanatical Vincentius a Thibari, that the *manuum impositio* in exorcismo must precede the baptism of heretics. But from the 76th letter of Cyprian ad Magnum the presence of exorcism in baptism generally cannot be proved; he is speaking there simply of exorcism in the case of *energumens*, and it is rather Cyprian's object to show that baptism is far mightier than exorcism. *Spiritus nequam ultra remanere non possunt in hominis corpore, in quo baptizato et sanctificato incipit spiritus sanctus habitare.*

† See my Hist. of the Planting, &c., Vol. I. p. 222.

‡ See above, p. 331.

§ Ep 76 ad Magnum.

|| The following is the passage, which, to make it intelligible, I have here rendered according to the sense:—“*Totum credentibus conferunt divina compendia.*”

be baptized, why fill them with perplexity in regard to their faith and the grace of the Lord? Or perhaps they have, indeed, partaken of the grace of the Lord, but in a smaller measure of the divine bounty and of the Holy Spirit; so that, while they must be considered as Christians indeed, they may not be placed on the same level with the rest? No; the Holy Spirit is not given by measure, but poured out in full on the faithful. For if the day breaks alike on all, and if the sun pours his light equally on all, how much more shall Christ, the true sun and the true day of his church, distribute the light of eternal life with unstinted equality!"

The baptismal formula, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, which is quoted as the traditional one by Justin Martyr, is perhaps not the oldest. The latter, perhaps, was a shorter formula which referred only to Christ, to which there seems an allusion in the New Testament, and which Marcion also insisted on in his attempt to bring about his restoration of the original gospel, and which, moreover, amid the disputes concerning the baptism of heretics, was specially recognised. But be this as it may, the shorter formula, it must be allowed, contains within it all that the longer one exhibits more fully set forth and unfolded.\*

Baptism at first was administered only to adults, as men were accustomed to conceive baptism and faith as strictly connected. There does not appear to be any reason for deriving infant baptism from an apostolical institution,† and the recognition of it which followed somewhat later, as an apostolical tradition, serves to confirm this hypothesis. Irenæus is the first father of the church in whom we find any allusion to infant baptism, and in his mode of expressing himself on the

\* See my *History of the Planting, &c.*, Vol. I. p. 222. [Surely the fair presumption that the Apostles used the form dictated by their Lord cannot be set aside by what at most seems an allusion and the practice of a heretic.—*Eng. Ed.*]

† The same, p. 224, ff. [Does not the apostle's argument, 1 Cor. vii. 14, "Else were your children unclean, but now are they holy," afford at least a presumption in favour of the apostolic institution of infant baptism? If, according to Neander himself, or, at least, to his paraphrase of Irenæus, infant baptism is the medium by which sanctification through Christ is appropriated to children, how could they be holy without baptism? The expressions, too, in Acts xvi. 15, 33, imply at least that infants were baptized, until it can be shown that in "her household" and among "all his" there were none but adults.—*Eng. Ed.*]



subject he implies at the same time its connection with the essence of the Christian consciousness, and testifies to the profound Christian idea, out of which infant baptism arose, and which finally procured its universal recognition.

Irenæus wishes to show that Christ did not disturb the development of that human nature which was to be sanctified by Him, but sanctified it in all the several stages of its natural course. "He came to redeem all by Himself; all who, through Him, are born again unto God; infants, little children, boys, young men and old. Therefore he passed through every age: for the infants He became an infant, sanctifying the infants; among the little children he became a little child, to sanctify those who are of this age, and at the same time to present to them an example of piety, uprightness, and obedience; among the young men he became a young man, that He might set them an example and sanctify them to the Lord." \* It is here especially important to observe that infants (*infantes*) are expressly distinguished from children (*parvulis*), and that Christ could *also* benefit them by His example; and that they are represented as capable of receiving from Christ, who had also lived through their period of life, simply an objective sanctification. This sanctification is imparted to them, in so far as they are born again to God through Christ. Now in the mind of Irenæus regeneration and baptism are intimately connected; and it is difficult to conceive how the term "being born again" can be employed, with respect to this age, to denote anything else than baptism. Infant baptism, then, appears here to be the medium through which the principle of sanctification, imparted by Christ to human nature from its earliest development, became appropriated to children. The very idea of infant baptism implies that Christ, through the divine life which he imparted to and revealed in human nature, sanctified that nature from its earliest germ. The child born in a Christian family was to have this advantage, that he did not first come to Christianity out of heathenism,

\* Irenæus, l. II. c. 22, s. 4: *Omnes enim per semetipsum venit salvare: omnes, inquam, qui per eum renascuntur in Deum, infantes et parvulos et pueros et juvenes et seniores. Ideo per omnem venit ætatem, et infantibus infans factus, sanctificans infantes; in parvulis, parvulus, sanctificans hanc ipsam habentes ætatem, simul et exemplum illis pietatis effectus, et justitiæ et subjectionis; in juvenibus, juvenis, exemplum juvenibus fons et sanctificans Domino.*

or the natural life of sin, but that from the first dawning of consciousness he should grow up under the imperceptible preventing influences of a sanctifying, ennobling Christianity,—that, in short, from the earliest dawn of the natural consciousness, a divine principle of life, capable of transforming nature, should be brought nigh to him, by which the diviner portion might be attracted and strengthened before the ungodly principle could come into full activity; so that the latter might at once find here more than a counterpoise. In such a case the new birth was not to constitute a new crisis, beginning at some definable moment, but it was to commence imperceptibly, and so to continue through the whole of life. Baptism, therefore, the visible sign of regeneration, was to be given to the child at the very outset; the child was to be consecrated to the Redeemer from the beginning of its life. From the predominance of this idea, founded on the inmost essence of Christianity, in the feelings of Christians, resulted the practice of infant baptism.

But immediately after Irenæus,\* in the last years of the second century, Tertullian appears as a zealous opponent of infant baptism; a proof that the practice was not universally regarded as an apostolical institution; for otherwise Tertullian would hardly have ventured to express himself so strongly against it. We perceive from his argument against infant baptism that its advocates were already accustomed to appeal to Matth. xix. 14: “Our Lord rejected not the little children, but commanded them to be brought to him that he might bless them.” Tertullian advises that, in consideration of the great importance of this rite and of the preparation necessary to be made for it on the part of the recipients, men generally should rather delay baptism than hasten to it unprepared, and he takes occasion here to declare his particular objection to haste in the baptism of children.† In answer to the argument for

\* It has been attempted to prove the practice of infant baptism from the passage already cited from Clement of Alexandria, *Pædagog.* l. III. f. 247: “τῶν ἐξ ὕδατος ἀνασπασμένων παιδίων,”—which, beyond question, refers to baptism; but this can hardly be considered a valid proof; for as the idea of the *θεῖος παιδαγωγός* was floating before Clement’s mind, he could denominate *all* Christians *παιδιά*. Beyond doubt, the writer is speaking in this passage directly of conversion and regeneration in reference to all men.

† De baptismo, c. 18: *Cunctatio baptismi utilior est, præcipue tamen circa parvulos.*



it drawn from Christ's words he replies, "Let them come while they are growing up; let them come while they are learning, while they are being taught to what they are coming; but let them be made Christians when they are able to know Christ. What hurries the age of innocence to the forgiveness of sins! We show more prudence in the management of our worldly concerns; we trust the divine treasure to those who cannot be intrusted with earthly property. Let them first learn to feel their need of salvation; so it may appear that we have given to those that wanted." Tertullian evidently means that children should be led to Christ by instructing them in Christianity; but that they should not receive baptism, until, after having been sufficiently instructed, they are led, from personal conviction and by their own free choice, to seek for it with sincere longing of the heart. It may be said, indeed, that he is only speaking of the course to be generally followed; whenever there was momentary danger of death, baptism might be administered, even according to his views. But if he had thought this to be so necessary, it does not seem likely that he would have failed expressly to mention it. It would appear, in fact, from the principles laid down by him, that he did not believe that *any efficacy whatever* resided in baptism unaccompanied by conscious participation and individual faith of the person baptized; nor could he see any danger accruing to the age of innocence from delaying it: a conclusion, however, by no means logically consistent with *his own system*.

But when, on the one hand, the doctrine of the hereditary corruption and guilt of human nature, the consequence of the first transgression, was reduced to a more precise and systematic form; and when, on the other, from the want of a due distinction between the outward sign and the inward grace of baptism (the baptism by water and the baptism by the Spirit), the error became more and more firmly established that without external baptism no one soever could be delivered from that inherent guilt, could be saved from the everlasting punishment that threatened him, or raised to eternal life; and when the notion of the magical effects of the mere administration of the sacraments gained ground continually,—the theory was finally evolved of the *unconditional necessity of infant baptism*. About the middle of the *third century* this theory was already

generally admitted in the North African church. The only point that was still in question was, whether the child ought to be baptized immediately after birth, or, as in the case of circumcision, not till eight days after. The latter was the opinion of the bishop Fidus, who submitted the question to a council convened at Carthage. Cyprian answered him in the year 252, in the name of sixty-six bishops.\* His answer evinces how full he was of that great Christian idea we have just unfolded, and which led to the practice of infant baptism, but at the same time it shows how his habit of dwelling on the outward has seduced him into combining much that is erroneous with the truth he insisted upon. He protests against the arbitrary limitation of Fidus. "None of us could agree to your opinion. On the contrary, we all judge that the mercy and grace of God is not to be refused to any human being as soon as he is born; for since the Lord says in His gospel, 'The Son of man is not come to destroy men's souls, but to save them' (Luke ix. 50), we must do everything that lies in our power, that, if possible, no soul may be lost. As God has no respect of persons, so too He has no respect of age, offering Himself as a Father with equal bounty to all, for the attainment of heavenly grace. As to what you say that the child is not *clean* to the touch for the first days after its birth, and that each of us would shrink from kissing such an object, even this, we think, ought not to be any obstacle to the bestowment of the heavenly grace; for it is written, 'to the pure all things are pure;' and none of us ought to make a scruple at that which God has deigned to create. Although the child be but just born, yet ought no one to scruple to kiss it at the imparting to it of the divine grace and at the salutation of peace (i. e. the brotherly kiss, which was given to persons newly baptized, as a sign of their fellowship in the peace of the Lord), since each of us must by his religious feelings be led to think upon the creative hands of God, fresh from the completion of their work, which we kiss in the newly formed man when we take in our arms what God has made. If, moreover, anything could prove a hindrance to men in the attainment of grace, much rather would adults be hindered by their heavy sins. But if even the chief of sinners who have sinned much and greatly against God receive the forgiveness of sins on coming to the

\* Ep. 59.



faith, and no one is precluded from baptism and from grace, how much less should the child be kept back, which, as it is but just born, cannot have sinned, but has only brought with it, by its descent from Adam, the infection of the old death ! It surely the more easily obtains remission of sins, when it is not its own sin, but that of another, which needs forgiveness."

The Alexandrian church also, notwithstanding that in its theological and dogmatical character it was essentially different from the church of North Africa, is found holding, even at a still earlier period, the doctrine of the necessity of infant baptism. Origen, in whose system infant baptism naturally finds its place,\* though not in the same connection of thought as it held in the system of the North African church, declares it to be an apostolical tradition ;† an expression, by the way, which perhaps cannot be regarded as of much weight, being made in an age when a strong inclination prevailed to derive from the apostles every ordinance which was considered of special importance ; and when, moreover, so many walls had already been thrown up between it and the apostolic age, hindering the freedom of prospect.

In the Persian church likewise infant baptism was, in the course of the third century, so generally recognised, that the heretic Mani thought he could draw an argument from it in favour of a doctrine which seemed to him necessarily presupposed by this application of the rite.

But if the necessity of infant baptism was acknowledged in theory, it was far from being uniformly recognised in practice. And indeed it was not always from the purest motives that men were induced to put off their baptism. The very same false notion of baptism as an *opus operatum* which had led some to consider the baptism of infants as unconditionally necessary, led many others, who indeed mistook the nature of this rite in a far grosser and more dangerous degree, to delay their baptism to the hour of death, in order that, freely aban-

\* Namely, in its relation to his theory that human souls are fallen heavenly beings, which need to be cleansed from a guilt which they brought with them into this earthly life.

† This, expressly in the fifth book of his Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, according to the Latin translation of Rufinus. In Origen's time, too, difficulties were still frequently urged against infant baptism, similar to those thrown out by Tertullian. Comp. his Homil. XIV. in Lucam (according to the translation of Jerome).

doning themselves in the mean time to their lusts, they might yet be cleansed by the magical annihilation of their sins, and so pass without hindrance into eternal life. We have already noticed the pious indignation and energy with which Tertullian, who in other respects was opposed to haste in baptism, combated this error.

It seems probable also that infant baptism furnished the *first* occasion for the appointment of sponsors or god-parents : for as in this case the persons to be baptized could not themselves make the necessary confession of faith and renunciation, it became necessary for others to do it in their name ; and these at the same time engaged to take care that the children should be rightly instructed in Christianity, and trained up in a life corresponding to the baptismal vow. They were therefore called sponsors (sponsores). Tertullian alleges it as an argument against infant baptism, that the sponsors assumed an obligation which they might be prevented from fulfilling, either by their own death or by the untoward conduct of the child.\*

With the rite of baptism several *symbolical customs* were joined, which flowed from the idea of the rite itself, and from a desire, by their means, to represent this idea to the senses. Thus, from the idea that the participation in the universal priesthood of all believers was considered to be necessarily united with the introduction to the Christian communion, the symbol of priestly consecration followed the act of baptism. As, in the Old Testament, anointing was the sign of consecration to the priestly office, so oil, which had been blessed expressly for this purpose, was applied to the newly baptized as a sign of consecration to this spiritual priesthood. We first meet with this custom in Tertullian, while, by the time of Cyprian, it appears an essential part of the rite of baptism.† The imposition of hands, accompanied by prayer,

\* De baptismo, c. 18 : Quid enim necesse est, sponsores etiam periculo ingeri ? quia et ipsi per mortalitatem destituere promissiones suas possunt, et proventu malæ indolis falli.

† L. c. c. 7 : Egressi de lavacro, perungimur benedicta unctione, de pristina disciplina, qua ungui oleo de cornu in sacerdotium solebant. Adv. Marcion, l. I. c. 14 ; de res. carn. c. 8. Yet in the book de corona milit. c. 3, where he describes the usages in baptism which were derived not from Scripture, but from ecclesiastical tradition, he makes no mention of this unction. Cyprian, ep. 70, in the name of an ecclesiastical assembly : Ungi quoque necesse est eum qui baptizatus sit, ut, accepto



with which the rite of baptism was concluded, is beyond doubt a still older custom. The sign of the imposition of hands (ἐπίθεσις τῶν χειρῶν, χειροθεσία, הַכֹּהֵן) was the usual sign of religious consecration, borrowed from the Jews, and employed on various occasions, either to denote consecration to the Christian calling in general, or to particular branches of it. While the apostles or rulers of the church laid their hands on the head of the baptized, they called upon the Lord to bestow his blessing on the holy ordinance now completed, to cause all its import to be fulfilled in him, to consecrate him with his Spirit for the Christian calling, and to pour out his Spirit upon him. This closing rite was inseparably connected with the whole act of baptism. All, indeed, had reference to the same principal thing, without which no one could be a Christian—the birth to a new life from God, the baptism of the Spirit, which was symbolically represented by the baptism of water. Tertullian still considers this rite and baptism inseparably connected, and forming but one whole, although he distinguishes in it the two distinct *momenta*, the negative and the positive, the forgiveness of sin and purification which was effected by baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and the communication of the Holy Spirit following thereupon to the individual now restored to the original state of innocence, to which communication the imposition of hands refers.\*

But when now the idea was established of a spiritual character belonging exclusively to the bishops, or successors of the apostles, which was communicated to them by ordination, and on which the propagation of the Holy Spirit in the church depended, it was considered as their prerogative to chrismate, esse unctus Dei et habere in se gratiam Christi possit (the following words, respecting the sacrament of the Lord's supper, are manifestly a gloss, disturbing the sense, and occasioned by the subsequent mention of the eucharist); unde baptizati unguuntur oleo in altari sanctificato.

\* De baptismo, c. 8: Dehinc manus imponitur per benedictionem, advocans et invitans Spiritum sanctum. He names together, de res. carn. c. 8, in connection with baptism, all the *three* things which afterwards, separated from it and combined together in one whole, constituted in the Roman church the sacrament of confirmation: the *unction*, conveying with it the consecration of the soul; the *signing with the cross*, conveying with it protection from evil; the *imposition of hands*, the illuminatio spiritus.

seal, by this consecration of the imposition of hands, the whole act of baptism. (Hence this rite was called *signaculum*, σφραγίς.) It was held that an authority for this could be drawn from the fact that the Samaritans, baptized by a deacon, were first endowed with spiritual gifts by the subsequent imposition of the apostles' hands (Acts xix.),\* as this passage was then understood. So now the presbyters, and, in case of necessity, even the deacons, were empowered to baptize, but the bishops only were authorised to consummate the second sacred rite. This notion was fully formed as early as the middle of the third century. The bishops, therefore, were obliged to go occasionally through their dioceses, in order to administer what was afterwards named *confirmation* to those who had been baptized by the pastors and priests of the country congregations. In ordinary cases, where the bishop himself administered the baptism, both were still united, and they thus constituted together *the complete act of baptism*.†

After all this had been performed in many of the churches—in those, for instance, of North Africa and of Alexandria—the person newly baptized had given to him a mixture of milk and honey, as a symbol of childhood in the new life, and as a spiritual application of the promise of a land flowing with milk and honey, to that heavenly country, with all its blessed privileges, to which the baptized belonged.‡ He was then

\* See, on this subject, my *History of the Planting, &c.*, Vol. I. p. 82, ff.

† Cyprian speaks of a sacramentum duplex, water baptism, and spiritual baptism, represented by the imposition of hands (sacramento utroque nasci), yet both united in the church act of baptism, ep. 72, ad Jubajanum, and ep. 72, ad Stephan. We must not lose sight here of the unsettled meaning affixed to the word sacramentum, according to which it signified any sacred thing, sacred doctrine, sacred sign. After citing the example of Philip and the apostles, he says, Quod nunc quoque apud nos geritur, ut, qui in ecclesia baptizantur, præpositis ecclesiæ offerantur, et per nostram orationem ac manus impositionem spiritum sanctum consequantur et signaculo dominico consummentur. The same notion occurs in the work de rebaptismate, which most probably was contemporary with the former; in it this act is denominated baptisma spiritale. Cornelius, in Euseb. l. VI. c. 43, asks, in the case of one who had not received this confirmation of the bishop, "How could he without this become partaker of the Holy Spirit?"

‡ See the passage above quoted from Tertullian's *De corona milit.* and adv. Marcion. l. I. c. 14: Deus mellis et lactis societate suos infantat (he causes them to be known as his new-born children). Clemens, *Pædagog.* l. I. f. 103: Εὐθὺς ἀναγεννηθέντες τιτιμήμεθα τῆς ἀναπαύσεως



received into the church by the first kiss of Christian brotherhood, the salutation of peace, of that peace with God which, in common with all Christians, he now shared; \* and from henceforth he had the right of saluting all Christians with this sign of brotherhood. But Clement of Alexandria had, even in his day, to complain that this brotherly kiss, originally a natural expression of Christian feeling, was become an *opus operatum*, of which men made a display, and gave unnecessary offence to the heathens.† His objection to it is, that love evinces itself, not in the brotherly kiss, but in the disposition of the heart.‡

Before taking leave of this subject we must notice a controversy which, in the second half of the third century, created no little agitation in the whole church. The question was, *What is necessary to the validity of baptism?* What is to be done in the case of a heretic who, having received baptism in his own sect, comes over to the orthodox church? Before any special discussion had arisen on this point, the various churches had pursued different courses, according to the different points of view from which, as usually happens in such cases, the instances had severally been considered. In Asia Minor and the adjacent countries the prevailing consideration was that no baptism was valid but what was administered in the orthodox church, where alone all religious rites possessed their true value; that the baptism of heretics was null and void; and that therefore the true baptism ought to be administered to such as came over from the sects as much as to heathens. This conclusion may be easily explained from the asperity of the polemical relations which subsisted between the church and the sects in these particular districts, and from the character of these sects, especially the Gnostic, who, in all the most essential points of doctrine and of practice, had departed so widely from what was generally received. In the Roman church, on the contrary, where in other respects a

τὴν ἐλπίδα, τὴν ἄνω Ἱερουσαλὴμ εὐαγγελιζόμενοι, ἐν ᾗ μέλι καὶ γάλα ὁμβρεῖν ἀναγέγραπται.

\* *Osculum pacis*, εἰρήνη. See above.

† In the passage already cited from the *Pædagog.* l. III. f. 256: οἱ δὲ οὐδὲν, ἀλλ' ἢ φιλήματι καταψοφῶσι τὰς ἐκκλησίας, τὸ φιλοῦν ἑνδον οὐκ ἔχοντες αὐτό. Καὶ γὰρ δὴ τοῦτο ἐκπέτληκεν ὑπονοίας αἰσχυρὰς καὶ βλασφημίας τὸ ἀναίδην χρῆσθαι τῷ φιλήματι, ὅπερ ἐχρὴν εἶναι μυστικόν.

‡ Ἀγάπη δὲ οὐκ ἐν φιλήματι, ἀλλ' ἐν εὐνοίᾳ κρίνεται.

bitter hostility against the heretics prevailed, the polemical tendency was overcome by a certain catholic instinct, by a predominant tendency to the objective. The principle pursued in practice was, that, in virtue of the objective value of the name of Christ or of the Trinity, which was invoked in its administration, baptism, *by whomsoever and under whatsoever* religious views it may have been administered, retains its validity in all cases. The heretics, therefore, who joined the church were recognised as baptized Christians; only the rite of confirmation, in the sense above explained, was bestowed on them by the bishop, in order that the Holy Spirit might render efficacious the baptism they had received,—a practice which was one of the causes which led to separating confirmation from baptism. As the different churches were generally willing to follow the model of the apostolical or metropolitan churches (the *sedes apostolicæ*), it is probable that most of the Western churches followed the example of the Romish church.

But towards the close of the second century the custom, which thus far had been tacitly observed, became an object of especial inquiry in Asia Minor; whether it was that the principle which prevailed in that region was followed also by the Montanistic churches,\* and was therefore called in question by those who opposed the Montanists in everything, or whether it was for some other reason. The majority declared in favour of the old principle. Somewhat later, when the matter was again in dispute, this principle was solemnly confirmed by two ecclesiastical councils—at Iconium, viz., and at Synnada in Phrygia. This led to the discussion of the question in other countries. Tertullian, most probably while he was still a member of the catholic church, wrote a special treatise in Greek on the subject; and this naturally enough, as that was the only language understood in the countries where the dispute had hitherto broken out. In this treatise he did not hesitate to dissent from the custom of the Roman church. To defend the recognition of heretical baptism the opposite party had probably appealed to Ephes. iv. 5, 6—"One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all"—and from these words had concluded that, wherever we find the invocation of that one God and that one Lord, we must recognise the validity of

\* See Tertullian, *de pudicitia*, c. 19.



baptism. But Tertullian replies,\* “This can relate only to us who know and call upon the true God and Christ. The heretics have not this God and this Christ. These words, therefore, cannot be applied to them; and as they do not rightly administer the ordinance, their baptism is as good as none.”

In the North African church men willingly followed, for the most part, the example of the mother church of Rome, but they were at the same time far from submitting their own judgment to the authority of that church.† At a council held in Carthage, over which the bishop Agrippinus presided, seventy bishops of North Africa declared in favour of the opposite opinion. As yet, however, neither party was disposed to force its own views and practice on the other. The churches which differed on this point did not, on account of a disagreement which so little concerned the essentials of Christianity, dissolve the bond of fraternal communion. But here, again, it was a *Roman* bishop, Stephanus, who, instigated by the spirit of hierarchical domination and blind zeal, first attached a great importance to this dispute. Towards the close of the year 253 he excommunicated the bishops of Asia Minor, Cappadocia, Galatia, and Cilicia,‡ stigmatising them as rebaptizers, anabaptists (*ἀναβαπτισταί*);§—a name, however, which they could justly affirm they did not, according to their own principles, deserve; for it was not their wish to administer a *second* baptism to persons already baptised, but they contended that the previous baptism, given by heretics, could not be recognised as a *true* one.

From Asia the discussions in regard to this matter extended themselves to North Africa. Here there was a party which had always adhered to the old Roman usages. The earlier discussions were now forgotten; and new questions and investigations arose. This induced Cyprian, the bishop, to propose the point for discussion at two synods held in Carthage in the year 255, the one composed of eighteen, and the other of seventy-one bishops; and both assemblies declared in favour of Cyprian's view, that the baptism of heretics ought not to be

\* De baptismo, c. 15.

† See above.

‡ Dionysius, in Euseb. l. VII. c. 5; Firmilianus in Cyprian, ep. 75.

§ The words of Cyprian, ep. 71 ad Quintum: Nos autem dicimus eos qui inde veniunt, non rebaptizari apud nos, sed baptizari.

regarded as valid. As he was well aware\* what importance the church of Rome and its followers attached to what had once been established, and that they held up this long-observed practice in the light of an apostolical tradition, although, from the nature of the thing, cases of this sort could not well occur in the time of the apostles, he thus protested against it in a letter to Quintus,† an African bishop, to whom he communicated the decisions of the first council: "This is a case in which men ought not to appeal to custom, but to convince by arguments. For even Peter, whom our Lord chose to be the first among the apostles, and on whom he founded his church, when Paul afterwards disputed with him concerning circumcision, Gal. ii.,‡ did not arrogantly presume on the primacy, and insist that the later and younger apostle should yield obedience to him; nor did he despise Paul because he had once been a persecutor of the church; but he took counsel of the truth, and so acquiesced readily in the correct views which Paul supported. He thus gave us an example of unanimity and of patience, teaching us not to cleave obstinately to our own way, but rather, when any useful and salutary thing is occasionally suggested to us by our brethren and colleagues, to make it ours if it be true and lawful." He also communicated the decisions of the greater council to Stephen the Roman bishop, in a letter written with great freedom of spirit, though great delicacy;§ but Stephen, in his reply, couched in a very arrogant tone,|| set up against Cyprian simply the tradition of the Roman church. He carried his blind, unchristian zeal so far as to indulge himself in undignified abuse of his African colleague, and refused an audience to the bishops who came to him as delegates of the North African council, and even forbade the members of his church to receive them into their houses! Yet Cyprian was far from submitting his reason to the authority of the Roman church. He convened at Carthage, in the year 256, a still more numerous council, composed of eighty-seven bishops, who also concurred in the principles before expressed. The North African church, under this zeal for the exclusive validity of catholic baptism, evinced, it is true, a fana-

\* See above.

† Ep. 71.

‡ It is remarkable how constantly the unbiassed, unprejudiced view of this fact had been preserved in the North African church.

§ Ep. 72.

|| See above, p. 301.



tical hatred of heretics ; an exaggerated opinion of the exclusive holiness of the catholic church.\* But still it is remarkable how the same individual, who generally held tradition in high esteem, opposed to it, on this occasion, truth and right reason. "In vain," he says, "do some who have the worst in argument oppose to us usage, as if usage were greater than truth, or as if in spiritual things one must not follow a better way if it has been revealed by the Holy Spirit."†

Cyprian now endeavoured to form a connection with the Asiatics, who entertained the same views of this matter with himself. With this view he laid the whole case before one of the most eminent of the Asiatic bishops, Firmilian, bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia. The latter signified his entire concurrence in Cyprian's views,‡ and added some pertinent remarks on the advantages of common deliberation on spiritual matters, when animated by the spirit of Christ. "Since divine doctrine transcends the limits of human capacity, and the soul of man cannot grasp the Whole and the Perfect, therefore is the number of prophets so great, in order that the manifold wisdom of God may be apportioned among many. And hence he who has first spoken as a prophet is commanded to keep silence when anything is revealed to another." 1 Cor. xiv. 30.

As, in a former controversy,§ Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, distinguished himself by his Christian moderation, so he exhibited a similar temper in the present dispute. On the point in question he agreed generally, it is true, with the churches of North Africa and Asia Minor, the same views having for a long time prevailed in the Alexandrian church.||

\* See Cyprian's words, ep. 71 : *Hæreticorum sordidam et profanam tinctionem vero, unico et legitimo ecclesiæ catholicæ baptismo præponere. Nihil potest esse commune Antichristo et Christo.* He styles the baptism of heretics "*aqua perfida et mendax.*" The opinions expressed by many of these bishops manifest the same spirit,—a forewarning of the struggles which in the fourth century were produced in these districts by a fanatical separative spirit.

† *Proinde frustra quidam, qui ratione vincuntur, consuetudinem nobis opponunt, quasi consuetudo major sit veritate, aut non id sit in spiritualibus sequendum, quod in melius a Sancto Spiritu revelatum.* Ep. 73.

‡ Cyprian, ep. 75, in a Latin translation, often literal.

§ See above, the Novatian schism.

|| That the Alexandrian church, too, rejected baptism administered in the churches of heretics, seems necessarily to follow from the declaration

But he differed from them in one particular; *his more liberal spirit was rather inclined to make exceptions to the rule*,\* in regard to many sects who in doctrine harmonised completely with the church. But at the same time he endeavoured to maintain brotherly unity with the bishops of Rome, and to dispose them to peace. He therefore earnestly entreated the Roman bishop Stephen not to disturb the Eastern church in her enjoyment of that external peace which the emperor Valerian had conceded to her, and of that internal peace which, since the suppression of the schism of Novatian, had accompanied it. "Know, my brother,"† he wrote, "that the once divided churches in the East and still beyond are now all united together, and that all the rulers of these churches agree, rejoicing exceedingly in the peace which, contrary to expectation, has fallen to our lot. All give praise to God in harmony and brotherly love." It was probably in consequence of the spirit of love and wise forbearance with which he negotiated with the Roman church that Stephen did not venture to excommunicate him with the rest. He continued the correspondence with Sixtus, the successor of Stephen; and to maintain the bond of brotherly love, he even asked his advice in relation to one matter where both of them could start from the same principles.‡

As the emperor Valerian became soon after a persecutor of the Christian church, this conflict without contributed to silence the disputes within it; perhaps, too, the successor of Stephen did not partake of his blind zeal.

It remains that we should consider somewhat more minutely the question in dispute between the two parties, and the mode of its development on both sides. The points of dispute were two.

of Dionysius in his letter to the Roman bishop Sixtus II., Euseb. l. VII. c. 7, where he says that, when members of the catholic church who had gone over to the heretics returned again to the former, it was not the custom to rebaptize them, for they had before received the *holy* baptism from the bishop. This, therefore, was the *only* case. Consequently baptism administered *out of the catholic church* was not recognised as holy, as valid.

\* Thus he made an exception of this sort with respect to the baptism administered by the Montanists, probably because he entertained milder views respecting their relation to the universal church. See Basil. Cæsar. ep. 188, or ep. canon 1.

† Euseb. l. V. c. 5.

‡ L. c. l. VII. c. 9.



In respect to *the first*, the Roman party maintained that the validity of baptism depended simply on its being administered agreeably to the institution of Christ. The *formula of baptism* in particular gave it its objective validity; it mattered not what was the subjective character of the officiating priest, who served merely as an instrument; it was also of no consequence where the baptism was administered. That which is objectively divine can preserve its power, the grace of God can in this manner operate through the objective symbol, if only it find in the person baptized a recipient soul; that person can receive the grace of baptism, wherever he might be baptized, through *his own faith*, and through his own *disposition of heart*.<sup>\*</sup> But Cyprian reproaches his opponents with inconsistency, from which charge it was not easy for them to defend themselves. If the *baptism* of heretics possesses an objective validity, then, for the same reason, their *confirmation* must also possess an objective validity. "For," says Cyprian, "if a person born out of the church (namely, to the new life) may become a temple of God, why may not also the Holy Spirit be poured out on this temple? He who has put off sin in baptism and become sanctified, spiritually transformed into a new man, is capable of receiving the Holy Spirit. The apostle says, 'As many of you as are baptized have put on Christ.' It follows, then, that he who may put on Christ when baptized by heretics, can much more receive the Holy Spirit, which Christ has sent." He says of his opponents, "They argue as if it were possible that Christ could be put on without the Spirit, or the Spirit could be separated from Christ."†

His opponents, on the other hand, maintained that no baptism could be valid unless administered in the true church,

\* Eum qui quomodocunque foris (without the church) baptizatur, mente et fide sua baptismi gratiam consequi. The opinion of the Roman church is by no means to be understood as if the mere employment of the correct formula of baptism, even when in all respects the original institution was wholly departed from, could render it valid. That the question related to a baptism which in other respects was administered in the right way was presupposed on both sides. Had his opponents been able to charge any fault upon Stephanus and his party in this respect, they would hardly have omitted the opportunity. Moreover, Dionysius of Alexandria, in the question which he proposed to the Roman bishop, Euseb. l. VII. c. 9, proceeds on the supposition that they were both agreed on that point.

† Cyprian, ep. 74.

where alone the Holy Spirit operates. If by this was meant merely an outward membership in the church, an outward connection with it, the decision of the question would be easy. But what Cyprian really meant was an inward subjective connection with the true church by faith and disposition of heart. He took it for granted that the officiating priest himself, by virtue of his faith, must be an organ of the Holy Spirit, and enabled by the simple influence of his priestly office duly to perform the sacramental acts, to communicate, for example, to the water its supernatural, sanctifying power.\* But when the matter took this shape—was made thus to *depend on the subjective character of the priest*—it would be difficult, in many cases, to decide as to the validity of a baptism, and much perplexity and doubt would embarrass the subject; for who could look into the heart of the officiating priest?†

But in their defence of the objective value of the formula of baptism the Roman party went still farther. Even a baptism where, instead of the complete form, simply “in the name of Christ” was employed, they declared to be objectively valid.‡

\* L. c. ep. 70: *Quomodo sanctificare aquam potest, qui ipse immundus est et apud quem Spiritus Sanctus non est? Sed et pro baptizato quam precem facere potest sacerdos sacrilegus et peccator? Ep. 76: Quando hæc in ecclesia fiunt, ubi sit et accipientis et dantis fides integra.*

† The author of the book *de rebaptismate*, which stands among the works of Cyprian, could therefore object, *Quid dicturus es de his, qui plerumque ab episcopis pessimæ conversationis baptizantur?* by those, *i. e.*, who afterwards, when their vices came to be known, were deposed. *Aut quid statues de eis, qui ab episcopis prave sentientibus aut imperitioribus fuerint baptizati?*

‡ From Cyprian's letters, and from the book *de rebaptismate*, it is undeniably clear that the Roman party maintained this. If Firmilian, in the 75 ep. Cyprian, speaks only of the formula of baptism in the *name of the trinitas*, it does not follow that the opponents had spoken barely of *this*. Firmilian gives prominence only to *that* point against which he meant *particularly* to direct his controversial argument, the principle that the baptismal formula gave to baptism an objective validity; and hence he does not distinguish what would have to be distinguished in exhibiting the opinion of his opponents. Yet we see also the other position of his opponents, which must have floated before his mind, discovering itself, when he says, *Non omnes autem, qui nomen Christi invocant, audiri, &c.* The tract *de rebaptismate*, a work of some acuteness, I have thought myself authorized to cite as undoubtedly belonging to this period. I cannot adopt the opinion that this work dates not before the close of the fourth century, or is even still later, and, according to *Gennadius de script*



Cyprian maintained, on the contrary, that no formula of baptism but the full form instituted by Christ had any value. We perceive here the more liberal Christian spirit of the anti-Cyprian party. The thought hovered vaguely before their minds, that in the belief in Christ everything that properly pertains to Christianity is involved.\*

Cyprian himself, however, did not venture to limit God's grace to such outward things in those cases where converted heretics had once been admitted without a new baptism, and had partaken of the communion of the church, or died in it. "God," he observes, "is mighty, according to His mercy, to show indulgence, and not to exclude from the benefits of the church those who have been received into it without further ceremonies, and thus fallen asleep."† A remarkable case of this sort is narrated by Dionysius of Alexandria.‡ There was in the church of Alexandria a converted heretic, who lived as a member of the church for many years, and had partaken in the public worship of God. Happening to be present at a baptism of catechumens, he remembered that the baptism which he himself had received *in the sect* from which he was converted (probably a Gnostic sect) bore no resemblance

*eccles.*, was written by *Ursinus a monk*. The writer discourses like a man who lived in the midst of these controversies, in the time of the persecutions; all which is inconceivable of an author belonging to a later period. When he says these controversies were to produce no other fruit, *nisi ut unus homo, quicumque ille est, magnæ prudentiæ et constantiæ esse, apud quosdam leves homines inani gloria prædicetur*, we see very clearly that Cyprian is here meant, and none but a contemporary could so speak of him. The expression in regard to an ancient apostolical tradition, "*post tot seculorum tantam seriem*," seems, it is true, out of the way in the mouth of a man who wrote in the middle of the third century. But in any case this expression would continue to be very hyperbolical, although employed by a writer at the end of the fourth century; and it is the fact generally that strong hyperboles are not unusual in the writers belonging to the African church.

\* In the book *de rebaptismate*: *Invocatio hæc nominis Jesu, quasi initium quoddam mysterii dominici, commune nobis et cæteris omnibus, quod possit post modum residuis rebus impleri*. The party of Stephen not inaptly appealed to the fact that St. Paul testified his joy in knowing that Christ was preached, even though it were not done in the right way, as was the case with regard to those judaizing Christians, *Philip. i. 16*. Cyprian, who wished to deprive them of the support of this text, does not understand it so well, *ep. 73*.

† *Ep. 70*.

‡ *Euseb. l. VII. c. 9*.

whatever to the one he now witnessed. Had he known that with Christ, as the object of faith, all is given that is necessary to the salvation of the soul, this circumstance could not have caused him so much uneasiness. But as this was not so clear to him, he doubted as to his title to consider himself a real Christian, and fell into the greatest distress and anxiety, believing himself to be without baptism and the grace of baptism. He fell down at the bishop's feet in tears, and besought him for baptism. The bishop endeavoured to quiet his fears: he told him that he could not be baptized anew at this late period, after he had so long partaken of the body and blood of the Lord. It ought to be enough for him that he had lived so long in the communion of the church, and all he had to do was to approach the holy supper with unwavering faith and a good conscience. But the wretched man found it impossible to overcome his scruples and regain his tranquillity. Here was a hindrance to that peace and joy in the divine grace by that temper of mind which is again in bondage to those elements of the world from which Christ has made us free.

We proceed now to the second holy symbol which Christ instituted for his church—the *Lord's supper*.

The last supper which Christ partook of with his disciples on earth must, from the nature of the case, have been full of meaning, as the parting meal of *Him* who was about to give up his life for *their* salvation, and for *that of all mankind*; and who afterwards, although no longer *visible* among them as at this meal, yet as truly, and with still more powerful divine operation and still richer blessing, would manifest among them His spiritual presence, and impart to them Himself and all His heavenly treasures. Besides, this meal was to take the place of the paschal supper, which Christ could no longer celebrate on earth. The feast in commemoration of the foundation and covenant of the *Mosaic religious constitution* was now, in accordance with the order of the theocratic economy, to exchange its earthly for a heavenly import, and to assume a new relation analogous to the new shape of the theocracy. The Jewish passover was a feast of thanksgiving for the grace which the Almighty Creator, who causes the fruits of the earth to grow for the service of men, had bestowed on His people when He honoured them with



His *especial guidance*, after delivering them from the Egyptian bondage. Every father of a family, who kept the passover with his household and distributed wine and bread among the guests, praised God, who had bestowed these fruits of the earth on man, for the favour he had shown to *his own* peculiar people. For this reason the cup of wine over which this giving of thanks was pronounced was called the cup of praise or thanksgiving.\* On the present occasion, then, Christ pronounced the blessing as the master of the household; a blessing, however, which, in its relation to the new shape the theocracy was about to take, received a new application. It was henceforward to denote deliverance from the guilt and punishment of sin; deliverance from the bondage of sin; and the gift of true moral freedom through the sacrifice of Christ for man—the preparation for entrance into a heavenly country. And this was the foundation of the kingdom of God, which is laid in the forgiveness of sins, and deliverance from sin, for all humanity. Hence Christ said, when he gave wine and bread to His disciples, that this bread and this wine *were to be to them*—and consequently to all the faithful in all times—His body and His blood;—the body which He was offering for the forgiveness of their sins, for their salvation, for the establishment of the new theocratical relation. And as these outward symbols represented to them His body and His blood, so would He Himself be hereafter spiritually present with them, as truly as he then was visible. And as they now sensibly partook of these corporeal means of sustenance, which represented to them His body and His blood, so should they, for the nourishment of their souls, receive Him, present in divine power, wholly within them; they should spiritually eat His flesh and drink His blood (John vi.), should make His flesh and blood their own, and suffer their whole nature to be more and more penetrated by that divine principle of life which they were to receive through their communion with Him. Thus, in order to glorify the effects of His suffering for mankind, to celebrate this intimate life-giving communion with Him, and consequently with one another, as members of one spiritual body under one Great Head, were they to keep this feast together, until at length, in the actual

\* כּוּם הַפֶּרֶךְ, ποτήριον εὐλογίας = εὐχαριστίας.

possession of that heavenly country, they should enjoy, in its fullest extent, the blessedness which had been obtained for them by His sufferings, and, never more to be separated from Him, they, face to face, should be united with Him in His kingdom.

After the model of the Jewish passover, and the first institution, the Lord's supper was originally united with a *common meal*. Both constituted a whole, representing not only the communion of the faithful with their Lord, but also their brotherly communion with one another. Both together were called the supper of the Lord (δεῖπνον τοῦ κυρίου, δεῖπνον κυριακόν), the supper of love (ἀγάπη).\* It was the daily rite of Christian communion in the first church at Jerusalem; the phrase κλᾶν ἄρτον, the breaking of bread, in Acts ii. 46, being most probably to be understood of them both together. In like manner we find both united in the first Corinthian church; and so it probably was with the innocent, simple meal of the Christians of which Pliny speaks in his report to the emperor Trajan.† On the contrary, in the description given by Justin Martyr we find the celebration of the Lord's supper entirely separated from those feasts of brotherly love, if indeed in those churches which he had in view they still existed at all. This separation was occasioned partly by similar irregularities to those which had arisen in the Corinthian church, when during these feasts a spirit prevailed unsuited to the holy rite which was to follow, and partly by local circumstances, which generally prevented the institution of such common meals. In truth these meals especially excited the jealousy of the heathens, and gave birth to the strangest and most malicious reports‡—a circumstance which may have early led to the agapæ being either totally abolished or less frequently observed.

We will now speak, in the first place, of these feasts of brotherly love, such as they were afterwards, when, separated from the supper of the Lord, they were specially called agapæ (ἀγάπαι). At these all distinctions of earthly rank and con-

\* See my History of the Planting, &c., Vol. I. p. 30.

† See above, p. 135.

‡ Tertullian on the hindrances which a Christian woman meets with when married to a heathen. Ad uxorem, l. II. c. 4: Quis ad convivium illud dominicum, quod infamant, sine sua suspicione dimittet?



dition were to disappear in Christ. All were to be one in the Lord; rich and poor, high and low, masters and servants, were to eat at the same table together. A description of such a feast has come down to us from Tertullian.\* "Our feast," he says, "shows its character by its name; it bears the Greek name of love; and however great may be the cost of it, still it is gain to be at cost in the name of piety, for by this refreshment we make all the poor happy. As the cause of the supper is a worthy one, estimate accordingly the propriety with which all the rest is managed; it is throughout such as its religious end demands. It admits of nothing vulgar, nothing unbecoming. No one sits down at the table till prayer has first been offered to God; we eat as much as hunger requires, we drink no more than consists with sobriety; while we satisfy our appetites we bear in mind that the night is to be consecrated to the worship of God. The conversation is such as might be expected of men who are fully conscious that God hears them. The supper being ended, and all having washed their hands, lights are brought in, and every one is invited to sing, either from holy scripture or from the prompting of his own spirit, some song of praise to God for the common edification: it then appears how he has drunken. The feast is concluded with prayer." These agapæ lost by degrees their true original meaning, which it was impossible for them to retain except in the time when Christians formed as it were but one family. They soon became a lifeless form, no longer animated by the original spirit of brotherly love, which, removing all distinctions between man and man, united together all hearts as one. Many abuses crept into them, which furnished occasion for evil-minded persons to represent the whole festival in an unfavourable light. As usually happens in such cases, some ascribed undue importance to the dead form, as an *opus operatum*; others unjustly condemned the whole custom, without distinguishing the right use of it from its abuse; neither party being any longer capable of appreciating the simple, childlike spirit in which this festival had originated. Wealthy members of the church provided such agapæ, and imagined they had done something peculiarly meritorious; and here, where all ought to be equal, attention began to be paid to distinction of ranks, and the clergy, who

\* Apologet. c. 39.

in humility should have shone forth before all, allowed themselves to be distinguished by outward preferences unworthy of their calling.\* A spirit, anything but childlike, morose, ascetical, condemned these agapæ altogether, and eagerly caught at every particular instance of abuse on these occasions, in order to paint them in exaggerated colours, and to bring discredit upon the whole custom. Such was the case with Tertullian after he became a Montanist.† Clement of Alexandria expresses himself with greater moderation,‡ although he condemns those who imagined they could purchase with banquets the promises of God, and who seemed to degrade the heavenly name of love by a particular appropriation of it to these feasts. "Love," says he, "is indeed a heavenly food. In heaven is this heavenly feast; the earthly one is indeed given by love, yet the feast is not love itself, but only the proof of a benevolence ready to communicate. Take care, therefore, that your treasure be not evil spoken of; for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. He who shares in this latter feast attains to what is most glorious, the kingdom of God, because he strives, even in the present world, to belong to that holy community of love, the church in heaven. *Love is the divine thing itself, pure and worthy of God; to communicate is a work of love.*"

So long as the agapæ and the Lord's supper were united together, the celebration of the latter formed no part of the divine service.§ The latter was held early in the morning, and not till towards evening did the church reassemble at the

\* A double portion was set before ecclesiastics, in accordance with a perverted and sensual interpretation of the text, 1 Timothy v. 17. Tertullian, when a Montanist, *De jejuniis*, c. 17: *Ad elogium gulæ tuæ pertinet, quod duplex apud te præsidentibus honos binis partibus deputatur. Comp. Apostol. Constitut. l. II. c. 28*, where that which Tertullian very properly censures is prescribed as a law. Clement, *Stromat. l. VII. f. 759*, respecting the Gnostic sects: *Ἡ συμποτικὴ διὰ τῆς ψευδωνύμου ἀγάπης πρωτοκλισία.*

† *De jejuniis*, c. 17: *Apud te agape in cacabis fervet. Major est agape, quia per hanc adolescentes tui cum sororibus dormiunt.* So passionate an accuser appears of course not worthy of credit.

‡ *Pædagog. l. II. f. 142.*

[§ This assertion is inconsistent with 1 Cor. xi. 22, compared with xi. 18, 20, whatever may be the sense in which the "church of God" be there understood.—*Eng. Ed.*]



common love-feast and for the celebration of the supper. At this celebration, as may be easily concluded, no one could be present who was not a member of the Christian church, and incorporated into it by the rite of baptism. But there was no reason for excluding unbelievers or the unbaptized from the worship held in the morning.\* It is clear from 1 Cor. xiv. 23-25, that in the age of the apostles no stranger was forbidden to enter those assemblies; that, on the contrary, such visits were regarded with pleasure, because the salutary impressions which were thus made on them might lead to their conversion. The Apostle St. Paul desired that divine service should be so conducted as to exert an influence of this kind on such persons. We see no reason to justify a deviation from this practice. There was no need to fear spies. The evil reports spread abroad concerning the Christians could be best refuted by eye-witnesses. Publicity was the best testimony to the innocence of the Christians. To this, moreover, Tertullian appeals: any one, he says, could convince himself of the falsehood of those stories, as the churches were so often surprised in their meetings, and thus many must have seen what was done in them.† If then the pagans themselves were challenged to testify what they had seen in the Christian assemblies when thus surprised, there certainly was no reason for repelling all visits of strangers for fear of spies.

But, when the celebration of the supper was disjoined from the agapæ and united with the other parts of divine service, it might happen on this very account that men would believe it

\* Dr. Rothe, in the acute and ingenious dissertation which has already been referred to, *de disciplina arcani*, maintains the opinion that the admission of unbelievers and catechumens to the first portion of the service was a later arrangement; and that it was the change which took place in the catechumenal instruction (see above, p. 422), and the introduction of a class of catechumens into the church assemblies, in which hitherto none but those that had been baptized took a part, which first led to the comparing of the Christian worship with the Grecian mysteries, and to the distinguishing of a *missa catechumenorum*, and a *missa fidelium*. But I cannot be persuaded that the suppositions on which this opinion rests are sufficiently well grounded, although I confess there is a want of precise data for a certain determination of the disputed questions. The reasons for my opposite views, and against Rothe, lie in my development of the matter itself.

† *Apologet. c. 7*: *Quotidie obsidemur, quotidie prodimur, in ipsis plurimum cœtibus et congregationibus nostris opprimimur.*

necessary to limit the presence of unbelievers, and to dismiss them from the celebration and from the preparatory service, because these, from their very nature, were designed only for the members of the church, and because originally all who were present partook also in the communion of the holy supper. Marcion, as a champion of apostolical simplicity in the church, a warm opponent of all Jewish, hierarchical peculiarities, combated the separation thus made between catechumens and the baptized entitled to communion, and their dismissal from certain prayers which were connected with the supper, as an innovation alien from the original spirit of the apostolic, or, as he called it, of the Pauline church.\* He was for the catechumens taking part in all the prayers of the church.† He could see nothing offensive even if those who did not intend to partake were present also at the celebration of the holy supper. Tertullian, on the other hand, objected to the heretics,—among whom he seems particularly to have had in mind the Marcionites,—that in their assemblies it was impossible to distinguish who were catechumens, and who were believers (baptized); that all entered in alike or together, and took part in the same prayers; that, moreover, when heathens came in, the holy (such as it was) was thrown to dogs and the pearls before swine: the celebration, he means, of the supper was exposed before the eyes of the profane; although, in truth, it was no Lord's supper—for Tertullian proceeded on the assumption that, among heretics, there could be neither a true baptism, nor a true Lord's supper.‡ From this passage it is perfectly clear, not that the pagans assisted in the divine service among the Marcionites and others, but that they could be present at the

\* In reference to the position held by such, Tertullian, *præscript. hæret. c. 41*: *Simplicitatem volunt esse prostrationem disciplinæ, cujus penes nos curam lenocinium (a corruption of the primitive unity), vocant.*

† See Jerome on the *epist. Galat. vi. 6*: Marcion hunc locum ita interpretatus est, ut putaret fideles et catechumenos simul orare debere, et magistrum communicare in oratione discipulis.

‡ Tertullian, *præscript. hæret. c. 41*: *Inprimis, quis catechumenus, quis fidelis, incertum est; pariter adeunt, pariter orant, etiam ethnici si supervenerint.* A different sense presents itself according as we join these words with what precedes or with what follows them. In the first case the whole would be a continuation of the same thought, and by the *sanctum* we should have to understand the church prayers. In the second case the sense expressed in the text would answer to the original.



whole without distinction. This it was that offended Tertulian. He demanded that, in the divine service, heathens, catechumens, and baptized persons should take their several places; that certain holy rites should be performed only in the presence of the last, but be concealed from the gaze of the profane. It was this arrangement the Marcionites combated, by virtue of which the divine service was divided into two portions, the acts in which catechumens and unbelievers might take part, and those in which only the baptized could take part. Here the comparison with the mysteries of the Greeks, of which we have already spoken, found a place; although we cannot assert that this division was originally the result of a comparison with the Greek mysteries. For those only who had been consecrated by baptism could the veil be removed from the hidden sanctuary.\* Thus it came about that, while Justin Martyr did not scruple to describe to heathens the administration of baptism and of the celebration of the Lord's supper, it was thought, on the other hand, after this transferring of the conception of the mysteries to the holy supper, that one ought not to speak of these holy things before the uninitiated. And this revolution coincides with the time of the great revolution we have described in the views of Christians with respect to the priesthood. To the inner connection which here presents itself it is unnecessary to direct the attention of our readers.

Even by the third century it had become customary for the clergyman who presided at its administration, before offering the prayers which were preparatory to the celebration of the communion, to admonish the church to silent devotion, calling

\* I cannot concur with Rothe in all the passages where he is disposed to find an allusion to the Greek mysteries, or an affectation of secrecy in imitation of them. In particular, in the language of Athenagoras, *Legat. pro Christianis*, f. 37, ed. Colon., I can see no trace whatever of concealment and mystery as to certain sacred rites. Athenagoras speaks of the fact that the Christians, who distinguished themselves for their zeal in behalf of strict morality, must expect to be accused by the pagans, who were slaves to every lust, of the same unnatural debauchery which they found existing among themselves, and in this connection he says, "Ὡς τί ἀν εἶποιμι τὰ ἀπόρρητα;" "What shall I say of that concerning which one would prefer to be silent?" *Indigna dictu*. Not a word here respecting the mysteries of the Greeks, nor respecting the sacraments of the Christians.

upon them to *lift up their souls to heaven*, and for the church to respond—*Yea, we have them lifted up to the Lord*.\*

We have already remarked that, from the Jewish passover, the prayer of praise and thanks had, through Christ, passed over to the Lord's supper among the Christians. This prayer of praise and thanks was, moreover, always considered as an essential part of the solemnity; and from it the Lord's supper obtained its name of *the eucharist* (εὐχαριστία†). The president or bishop, taking the bread and wine from the table that stood before him, gave thanks to God, in the name of the whole church, that He had created the *things of nature* (which were here represented by the most essential means of sustenance) for the use of man; and that He, the Lord of nature, had also, for the sake of man, given his Son to appear and suffer in a human nature. Both the thanksgiving for the gifts of nature and the thanksgiving for the blessings of grace were to the Christian mind intimately connected by a natural association of ideas. For it is not until redeemed man returns

\* Cyprian, de oratione dominica: Sacerdos ante orationem præfatione præmissa parat fratrum mentes dicendo: *sursum corda*, ut dum respondet plebs: *habemus ad Dominum*, admoveatur, nihil aliud se quam Dominum cogitare debere. And Commodian, c. 76, in rebuking the female practice of talking in the church, says,—

Sacerdos Domini cum sursum corda præcepit;  
In prece fienda ut fiant silentia vestra,  
Limpide respondes nec temperas quoque promissis.

Thus we already find traces of the liturgy which we become acquainted with in the fourth century.

† The term "εὐχαριστία" is used metonymically, resembling in all respects the phrase "ποτήριον ὑμῶν, ὃ ὑμῶν ἐκλογίαν" in St. Paul = "ἡ εὐχαριστία τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος καὶ οἶνος" in Justin Martyr,—the bread and wine over which the prayer of thanksgiving *has been pronounced*. The latter says expressly, that immediately after the president of the church has pronounced this prayer of thanksgiving over the bread and wine, and the church joined in it with their Amen, the sacramental elements were distributed. He mentions no other consecration. He says, 'Ἡ δὲ εὐχὴς λόγου τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ (τοῦ Χριστοῦ) εὐχαριστηθῆναι σποδῆναι.' This cannot be a prayer which came verbally from Christ, for they had no such prayer; but it is rather the prayer of thanks generally, instituted by him, which, after his example, was to be offered at this celebration. It may be, however, that the words of the institution were introduced into this prayer. In the language used by Firmilian, Cyprian, ep. 75, "invocatione non contemptibili sanctificare panem et eucharistiam facere," lies probably the idea of a consecration, whereby the ordinary bread became the sacrament of the supper.



to a childlike relation to the Heavenly Father, that he truly perceives how all has been bestowed on him by the love of his Heavenly Father; now every earthly gift acquires for him a new and higher significancy, as a pledge of an eternal love, imparting to man far higher blessings than these. All nature, which before, in his bondage to sin, and estrangement from God, had been desecrated by man, was now sanctified anew for him as a redeemed creature; and in the Lord's supper the earthly and natural was again to become transfigured into a symbol or vehicle of the heavenly, the divine. With the bodily food, thus sanctified by the prayer of thanksgiving, was now to be connected, by the power of the same God who had caused this earthly sustenance to grow for the use of man, a higher, heavenly food for the life of the inward man. (We shall say nothing at present of the different notions concerning the relations of the signs to the thing represented.)

This connection of ideas was quite familiar to the early Christians; they often made use of it in their controversies with the Gnostics, who affected a contempt for nature. Attached to this, moreover, was the allusion of a *peculiar custom* of the church at this period; the members of the community themselves offered wine and bread as free gifts, and from these were taken the elements for the celebration of the Lord's supper.\* These gifts were regarded as the spiritual thank-offering of the Christians. The president of the church, in taking from these gifts the elements for the Lord's supper, and consecrating them to God with praise and thanksgiving, represented the whole community as one priestly race, as one in the Lord, and as ready to devote again to the service of God all that they had received from Him. This thank-offering of the Christians, considered as a spiritual offering of the heart, as a free expression of childlike love and gratitude, was opposed to the sacrificial worship of the pagans and Jews. In part, these gifts of the Christians; in part, the prayer of thanks of the presiding church officer, with which they were consecrated to God; in

\* This usage, which is already plainly presupposed by the allusions of Justin Martyr, of Irenæus, is mentioned in express terms by Cyprian, *de opere et eleemosynis*, where he rebukes the rich woman who came to the communion without bringing with her a gift of charity for the necessities of the church. *Locuples et dives es, et dominicum sine sacrificio venis, quæ partem de sacrificio, quod pauper obtulit, sumis?*

part, finally, the entire celebration of the Lord's supper, was called (originally in *this* sense only) an offering or sacrifice, προσφορά, θυσία.\* In this sense Justin Martyr says,† "The prayers and thanksgivings offered by worthy men are the only true sacrifices well-pleasing to God; these *alone* have the Christians learned to offer." He regards this as a proof of the priestly nature of the Christians; since God receives offerings from none but His priests. In this sense Irenæus, contrasting those spiritual offerings with every species of ceremonial connected with a sacrificial worship, observes, "It is not the *offering* that sanctifies the man, but it is the conscience of the offerer that sanctifies this offering, if it be pure, and induces God to receive it as from a friend."‡

Accordingly, the idea of a sacrifice in the supper of the Lord was at first barely symbolical; and originally this idea did not even have reference to the sacrifice of Christ.§ The only thing originally had in view was, I think, the spiritual thank-offering of the Christians, of which the presentation of the bread and wine, the first fruits of nature's gifts, served as a symbol; while no doubt the consciousness of the new relation to God, which the sufferings of Christ had given to the redeemed, was implied throughout.|| Afterwards the refer-

\* Hence the expression which occurs so frequently in Cyprian: oblationem alicujus accipere, offerre. To receive such gifts from any one for the church,—to take from them the elements of the supper and consecrate them,—was evidence that he was considered to be a *regular* member of the church.

† Dial. c. Tryph. Jud. f. 345.

‡ Iren. l. IV. c. 18.

[§ But does not St. Paul imply a reference to this sacrifice, 1 Cor. xi. 26, 27?]

|| A single passage in Irenæus, l. IV. c. 18, s. 4, seems to speak a different language: "verbum quod offertur Deo;" therefore the Logos himself, Christ, is offered up in the sacrament of the supper. But even if there were no other reading, yet *this* could not be the genuine one; for such an expression would not only manifestly contradict the whole chain and connection of ideas *elsewhere* so luminously exhibited in Irenæus, but it would also be unsuited to what immediately precedes. He had just said, "offertur Deo ex creatura ejus" (thus the offering is referred to the bread and wine); and in the preceding chapter, s. 6, it is said, "per Christum offert ecclesia." Beyond question, therefore, the reading of other manuscripts at this place, "per quod offertur," must be received as the true one. It is precisely the reference to Christ, the high priest, which gives, as well to this spiritual thank-offering as to the entire Christian life, the right consecration. This is the meaning of Irenæus.



ence to the death of Christ was made more prominent, yet so that it continued still to be no more than the idea of a commemorative or symbolical representation of this sacrifice. But as one error begets another, it was quite natural that the notion of a particular priesthood in the Christian church, corresponding to that in the Old Testament, should give birth to the notion of a sacrificial worship in the New which should stand in a similar relation to that of the Old; and so it came about that the whole idea of sacrifice in the Lord's supper, which in the first instance was simply symbolical, took a direction altogether wide of its true import, the earliest indications of which we find in Cyprian.

Common bread, such as was presented by the church, was used for the Lord's supper. Justin Martyr calls it expressly common bread (*κοινὸς ἄρτος*). Those who went on the supposition that Christ kept the passover a day earlier than it was usually observed could have no reason for taking other than common bread for the celebration of the ordinance; but even those who held the contrary opinion did not think the use of unleavened bread an essential thing in the performance of the rite. We meet with but one exception, in a class of Judaizing Christians\*—an exception, however, which explains itself. This body only celebrated the Lord's supper once in the year, at the feast of the passover, in remembrance of the last supper of Christ; hence they were bound, as still observing the Jewish ceremonial law, to use unleavened bread.† As among the ancients, and especially in the East, it was not customary to drink at meal-time pure wine unmingled with water, it was taken for granted that Christ also, at the institution of the supper, made use of wine mixed with water. The taste, however, for higher mystical interpretations could not be satisfied with this simple, but, as it seemed, too trivial explanation of the prevailing custom. The mixing of water with the wine was said to denote the union of the church with Christ.‡

\* Epiphanius says respecting the Ebionites of his time that they annually celebrated the communion with unleavened bread and with water (the latter because their ascetic principles allowed not the use of wine).

† See what is to be said hereafter of the Ebionites.

‡ Quando in calice vino aqua miscetur, Christo populus adunatur. Cyprian, ep. 63.

As we have already remarked, the celebration of the Lord's supper, as appears from Justin Martyr, was still held to constitute an essential part of divine worship on every Sunday; and the whole church partook of the communion after they had joined in the Amen of the preceding prayer. The deacons carried the bread and wine to every one present, in order. It was held necessary that all the Christians in the place should, by participating in the communion, maintain their union with the Lord and his church; the deacons therefore carried a portion of the consecrated bread and wine to strangers, to the sick, to prisoners, and all who were prevented from being present in the congregation.\*

In some churches, however, as for example that of North Africa, the daily partaking of the communion continued to be held necessary; since it was considered the daily bond of union between the Lord and the church, the daily means of promoting strength, life, and salvation to Christians. Accordingly Tertullian and Cyprian give a *spiritual* explanation of the petition for our daily bread, as looking for an uninterrupted sanctifying union with the body of Christ through the Lord's supper. But when there was no longer a daily service, or a daily celebration of the Lord's supper, the only means left was to carry home a portion of the consecrated bread, which, in this case of necessity, was to be the substitute for the whole communion—the first trace of the practice of receiving the Lord's supper under *one* kind. Thus every Christian, with his family, after the morning devotions, and before engaging in his daily business, partook of the communion at home, that the life of the whole ensuing day might be sanctified by fellowship with the Lord. In all this we recognise ideas which have their foundation in the very depth of the Christian

\* In the description of the rite by Justin and by Irenæus, cited in Eusebius, l. V. c. 24: Πίμπειν εὐχαριστίαν τοῖς ἀπὸ τῶν παροικιῶν παρεούσιν, where the author is speaking of the Roman bishops. Thus arose first the custom of communicating with elements previously consecrated (the προηγιασμένα, as they were afterwards called). The ruling idea was, that the communion could properly be rightly administered only in a church; the communion, therefore, of persons absent was to be considered as only a continuation of that communion of the whole body of the church. But when in Cyprian mention is made of *presbyteris* apud confessores *offerentibus*, the meaning probably is, that the elements were first consecrated by the presbyters on the spot.



consciousness; but amidst them we also discern the same disturbing tendency to an over-estimate of external things, which we have already met with in so many different forms, and which was ever prone to ascribe an almost magic power of sanctification to the sensible elements.\*

In other countries, however, perhaps even as early as this date, the church acted upon the principle that no one ought to partake of the holy supper without a previous especial preparation of the heart, and therefore only at stated seasons chosen according to each one's necessities. The learned Hippolytus, who lived in the first half of the third century, wrote even at this early date a treatise on the question, "whether a man ought to communicate daily or only at stated seasons."†

As the church of *North Africa* was the first to bring prominently forward the necessity of infant baptism, so did they also join with it the *communion of infants*; for as they did not sufficiently distinguish between the sign and the divine thing which it signified, and as they understood all that is said in the sixth chapter of John's gospel concerning the eating of the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ of the mere outward participation in the Lord's supper, they concluded that this, from the very first, was absolutely necessary to the attainment of salvation.‡

The celebration of the Lord's supper was the seal of every

\* To this custom the following passages refer. Tertullian, speaking of the suspicion of the pagan husband towards his Christian wife, *Ad uxorem*, l. II. c. 5: *Non sciet maritus, quid secreto ante omnem cibum gustes? Et si sciverit panem, non illum credit esse, qui dicitur.*—*De orat.* c. 19 (in the piece discovered by Muratori), *Accepto corpore Domini et reservato* (respecting a Christian mistress of a family), *arca sua, in qua Domini sanctum fuit.*§ Cyprian, *de lapsis*, p. 189, ed. Baluz.—In the work ascribed to Cyprian, *de spectaculis*, respecting one who runs from the church to the theatre: *Festinans ad spectaculum, dismissus e dominico et adhuc gerens secum, ut assolet, eucharistiam.*

† See Hieronym. *ep.* 71, *ad Lucin.*

‡ And so it came about that to children who were not yet able to eat bread they gave *wine*. Cfr. Cyprian, *de lapsis*. Another example of a superstitious abuse, contrary to the original institution, leading to a separation of the elements of the supper.

[§ Mr. H. J. Rose points out that this quotation is a compound of two; the words down to "reservato" being from Tertullian, and those beginning with "arca" from Cyprian.—*Eng. Ed.*]

religious consecration. It was accordingly used at the conclusion of a marriage,\* and also at the solemnities in commemoration of the dead. Of the latter we will here speak somewhat more at large.

As Christianity in no case suppressed the natural feelings of man, but ennobled them; as generally it opposed not only the *corrupt civilization* which would crush these feelings of nature, but also their unrestrained indulgence in a rude uncivilized state, so it exercised a similar influence with regard to mourning for the dead. From the very first, Christianity condemned the wild and hypocritical expressions of grief with which the funeral procession was accompanied—the loud wailings of women who had been hired for the occasion (*mulieres præficæ*); and yet it demanded no stoical resignation and apathy, but rather sought to mitigate and refine the anguish of sorrow by the spirit of faith and hope, and of childlike submission to that eternal love which takes away only to restore under a more glorious form all that it has taken; which separates for the moment, in order to unite again those whom it has separated in a glorified state for all eternity. When multitudes at Carthage were swept away by a desolating pestilence, Cyprian said to his church, “We ought not to mourn for those who, by the summons of the Lord, are delivered from the world, since we know they are not lost, but sent before us; that they have only taken their leave of us in order to precede us. We may long for *them* as we do for those who are on a distant voyage, but not lament them. We must not put on *dark robes* of mourning here below, while above *they* have already put on the *white robes* of glory; we must not give the heathens just cause to accuse us both of weeping for them as lost and extinct, of whom, nevertheless, we say that *they are alive with God*, and of failing to prove by the witness of our hearts the faith we confess with our lips. We, who live in hope, who believe in God, and trust that Christ suffered and rose again for us; we, who abide in Christ, who through Him and in Him rise again,—why do we not ourselves wish to depart out of this world; or why do we mourn our departed ones as lost, when Christ, our Lord and God, exhorts us,

\* *Oblatio pro matrimonio*. As to what is to be understood by this, see above.



saying, 'I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die'? Why do we not hasten to see our country, to greet our parents? There there awaits us a vast multitude of dear ones, fathers, brothers, and children, who are already secure of their own salvation, and anxious only for ours. What a mutual joy to them and to us, when we come into their presence and embrace!"\* Out of this tone of feeling arose the Christian custom that the memory of the dead should be celebrated by their relations, husbands, or wives, on the anniversary of their death, in a manner suited to the spirit of Christian faith and hope. It was usual on this day to partake of the supper of the Lord in the consciousness of an inseparable communion with those who had died in Christ: a gift was laid on the altar in their name, as if they were still living members of the church; and in return for this, the petition for peace to the souls of the departed was introduced into the prayer of the church which preceded the communion.†

But when the ideas of the priesthood and sacrifice took another shape, this circumstance also would necessarily react on the Christian commemorations associated with this holy rite. We meet with indications of this as early as in Cyprian.

While individual Christians and Christian families celebrated in this manner the memory of the dead who were especially near to them by the ties of kindred, *whole churches* also commemorated those who had died in the midst of them as witnesses for the Lord.‡ The anniversary of their deaths was looked upon as their birthday to a nobler existence. Great care was bestowed on the burial of their bodily remains, as the sanctified organs of holy souls, which one day were to awake for their use in a more glorious form. On every yearly return of their birthday (in the sense which has been explained) the people gathered round their graves, where the story of their confession and sufferings was read aloud, and the

\* Cyprian, de mortalitate.

† Oblationes pro defunctis annua die faciemus. Tertullian, de corona milit. c. 3, as an ancient tradition. The same writer says to a widower, in reference to his deceased wife, "Pro ejus spiritu postulas, pro qua oblationes annuas reddis. Commendabis per sacerdotem," etc. De exhortatione castitat. c. 11.

‡ The dies natales, natalitia martyrum, γενέθλια τῶν μαρτύρων.

communion celebrated under a conviction of a continued fellowship with them, through union with Him for Whom, by their sufferings, they had witnessed a good confession.\* The simple Christian character of these commemorative festivals is evinced by the manner in which the church at Smyrna, in their account of the martyrdom of Polycarp, their bishop, answered the reproach of the heathens, who refused to give up the remains of the martyr lest the Christians should abandon the *crucified* and begin to worship *him*.† “Ye are not aware,” writes the church, “that we can neither forsake that Christ who suffered for the salvation of the whole world of the redeemed, nor worship any other. We *supplicate* Him as the Son of God; but the martyrs we *love*, as they deserve for their exceeding love to their King and Master, and because we also wish to become their companions and fellow-disciples.”‡ The church then proceeds to say,—“We gathered up his bones, which are more precious than gold or jewels, and deposited them in a becoming place; and God will grant us to assemble there in joy and festivity, and to celebrate the birthday of his martyrdom, both as a commemoration of the departed warrior, and as an exercise and preparation of those whom the battle still awaits.”§ Yet it cannot be denied that as early as the time of Cyprian, or even earlier (for Tertullian, when a Montanist, argued against this error), the germ of an excessive veneration for the martyrs was already showing itself. So universally is man inclined to *over-estimate the human, to deify the instrument*, which should rather direct the heart to Him who employs it; and whenever the germ of falsehood has once manifested itself, it will (if it be not checked by a mighty reaction of the sense of truth) before long unfold its errors and spread wider and wider.

\* The oblationes, sacrificia pro martyribus, presupposed originally that the martyrs were like *other sinful men*, who stood in need of the intercessions of Christians. This usage, in its *original sense*, was little in harmony with an extravagant veneration of the martyrs; this circumstance accordingly must have afterwards led to a different interpretation of the ancient custom.

† Euseb. l. IV. c. 15. See above, p. 153.

‡ Τοῦτον μὲν γὰρ οἶόν ὄντα τοῦ Θεοῦ, προσκυνοῦμεν τοὺς δὲ μάστιγας, ὡς μαθητὰς τοῦ κυρίου καὶ μιμητὰς ἀγαπῶμεν, ἁγίων ἐνεκα εὐνοίας ἀν' ὑπερβολῆς τοῦ τῆς εἰς τὸν ἴδιον βασιλεία καὶ διδάσκαλον.

§ Εἰς τι τῶν προηδληκότων μνήμην, καὶ τῶν μελλόντων ἀσκήσιν τι καὶ ἱτοιμασίαν.



## SECTION FOURTH.

## HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY, APPREHENDED AND DEVELOPED AS A SYSTEM OF DOCTRINES.

THE same law according to which, as we have seen in the preceding sections, Christianity unfolded and shaped itself outwardly from within, will again offer itself to our notice in the present section, in which we propose to trace the progressive development of *Christian doctrine*. It is the law expressed in the words we have prefixed as the motto to this volume—words employed by our blessed Lord himself to describe the manner in which his kingdom should be developed on the earth. As the little leaven cast into the lump of meal produces in it a process of fermentation, and, working by its inherent virtue, assimilates the whole to itself; so Christianity—the heavenly leaven—by the power of a divine life, created a ferment in human nature, which from its hidden depths, the inmost recesses of the natural heart, extended its influence both to the faculties of thought and the outward conduct, assimilating, transforming, and fashioning the whole to its own likeness;—an effect which could only be brought about by a gradual process of development, and after manifold conflicts with the foreign elements it had to subdue. Having contemplated the workings of Christianity in the phenomena of *life*, it will now be our object to trace them in the development of *thought* and of *knowledge*.

As it is one essential characteristic of Christianity that it did not deliver a new law of the letter in distinct precepts, nor found a new society, organized from without by certain invariable external forms; so it is another, that it did not communicate a rigid system of doctrines, settled and determined once for all in a sum of certain fixed notions. In both respects the word of the quickening Spirit was to make its way outwards from within—in the shaping of the external life, as well as in the stamping of its doctrines into distinct notions. The divine revelation was so framed, that by man's reason divinely enlightened, while his conduct was regulated by the new divine

life, it might be elaborated and developed in proportion as he became more fully penetrated by its spirit, and with free activity in a way befitting its peculiar essence. It was not something engrafted on the characters of men, that would for ever remain foreign to them; but a divine matter, suited to all individualities of human character, in which these were to find, not their annihilation, but their completion, was designed for the very end of being adopted by each in his own way, and of being developed by them in the most appropriate form. As Christ Himself, the second man, the prototype of the new regenerated humanity, is exalted above all the contrasts of human individuality, and comprises in Himself the original elements of them all harmoniously combined; so what in Him is *one*, must, in the ennobled human nature proceeding from Him, be individualized. The manifold peculiarities of character, destined, when animated by His life, to present different phases of Himself, were to coöperate, each supplying what the others might lack, to give a perfect exhibition of the fulness of Christ in the course of history.\* And this law finds its application at the very outset in those who formed the necessary connecting links between Himself and the succeeding development of the church—those organs and vehicles of His Spirit to all subsequent ages. The mode of apprehending and presenting that divine truth, which is one in essence, was of necessity, even at this point, separated into four great and peculiar directions, which were, so to speak, the complements one of another in exhibiting the whole fulness of Christ; as is evident when we compare the different characters of St. James and St. Peter, St. Paul and St. John. The spirit of Christ exercised too mighty an influence over their respective characters, which it attracted and animated, for it to be possible

\* I cannot deny myself the pleasure of calling attention to those beautiful words of Schleiermacher, which express so profound an understanding as well of the historical development of Christianity as of the essential character of Christ. "If we contemplate Christendom in its full and complete sense, if we can but for a moment so illuminate the mind's eye and so kindle the fire of love in the heart as to be no longer shocked and repelled by differences, we shall find in them all, taken together, not only the fulness of Christ and the fulness of the undivided Spirit of God, but we shall also see therein the Father who has revealed himself in his Son, and be able to take in at a glance all these several broken rays of divine light as they proceed from one central point." Schleiermacher's *Predigten*, neue Ausgabe, B. III. p. 590.



for them to unfold themselves in such a degree of opposition as to exclude one another. Whatever, therefore, was diverse in them remained subordinate to a higher unity. And so ever after;—it depended on the natural diversities of human character which of these grand tendencies in the original presentation of Christianity should chiefly attract each man; and on which side, in what form of it, each could appropriate it to himself and conceive it.

But in its later course of development the power of Christ's spirit no longer predominated, subordinating the human element to itself, but, on the contrary, the human individuality was felt more and more. And now partial systems arose, running counter to each other, and doing in one way or another great injury to the cause of divine truth; and it was reserved to the further progress and purification of the church to restore once more a clear apprehension of that unity in the midst of these conflicting elements.

In the preceding section we have seen Christianity in conflict with the religious principles of the old world—with paganism and Judaism. But the conflict was not merely an open one, but those principles insinuated themselves into the very modes of apprehending Christianity itself, threatening to corrupt it by lowering it to their own standard and blending themselves with it. And we shall observe the same phenomena in the process of the development of doctrines. As, in the progressive evolution of the Christian life, we saw Jewish and pagan elements entering in with a pernicious influence, and nevertheless the Christian principle preserving itself pure in conflict with both; so in the history of doctrine we shall again witness the same tendency. And thus, as they both sprang from a common root, we shall be able to perceive the intimate connection between the development of the Christian principle in doctrine and in life, in dogmatics and in ethics. Now, wherever the religious tendencies of the old world, which were the first that from without presented themselves in hostility to Christianity, became so mixed up with its inner development as to mutilate the very foundation of the Christian faith by appropriating a part only, there those phenomena arose which were distinguished by the name of heresies.\* In later times,

\* The word *αἵρεσις*, in its original signification, grounded on its etymology, has, as is well known, no bad meaning attached to it; but in the philosophical *usus loquendi* denotes the choice of certain principles

however, this name has often been employed in a very different manner. A single dominant sect refusing to recognise the manifold phases that in the healthy development of Christian truth necessarily presented themselves, and seeking to substitute for the unity which exhibits itself in multiplicity, a uniformity fatal to the healthy process of development, has too often attempted by this name to brand as a morbid symptom every deviation from its own mode of apprehending Christianity, which claimed to be the only healthy one.

The varied and great phenomena of the heresies which arose in this period, exhibiting the elements of Jewish and Oriental-Greek culture in various combinations, reveal, on one side, the chaotic heavings of a world out of joint, on the point either of dissolution or of rising into a new creation, which a new in-breathing of the breath of life was to call forth out of the chaos. On the other hand they bear witness to the mighty attractive power which the manifestation of Christ exerted on the various elements of this chaos and of the powerful impression which it produced, both by attraction and repulsion. Even if nothing had come down to us save the knowledge of these phenomena,—if we knew nothing of the causes by which they were produced,—yet any profoundly reflective mind would feel constrained to recognise, in these mighty after-workings, some still greater phenomenon that had preceded them; and it would doubtless be possible, from a study of the one, to infer the character of the other.

Since in these heresies we must recognise the reaction of different principles, which, having prevailed in the ancient world, had forced their way into Christianity itself and sought

for the whole regulation of life,—some particular conviction determining the character of the life. Hence it was used to designate the different schools of philosophy, which were divided each from the other by their difference in respect to such convictions. Thus Sextus Empiricus gives, as the most general definition of the word, *λόγῳ τινὶ κατὰ τὸ φαινόμενον ἀκολουθοῦσα ἀγωγὴ*. But where the question turns not on the different opinions of men with regard to important subjects, but on truth communicated by divine revelation, whereby the foundation is to be laid of a fellowship and unity of religious conviction, of an all-embracing church, the word *αἵρεσις*, as opposed to this postulate, as denoting the preponderance of the subjective side, whereby that higher fellowship and unity are violated, takes in the associated idea of arbitrary human opinion, through which divine truth becomes corrupted; and with such an associated evil meaning the term seems to be employed even in the *usus loquendi* of the New Testament.



to maintain themselves in union with it, they must have subserved one important end. The Christian mind, while it repelled these reactions, must in this opposition have developed and expressed itself still more clearly than it could have done if these fundamental principles had assailed Christianity merely from without. These conflicts could not fail to result in a more clearly developed and more sharply defined conviction of the distinctive essence of Christianity generally, and of its several doctrines in particular.

By considering the oppositions most distinctly marked between the heresies of this period and that process of development by which the Christian consciousness, which was thus more clearly unfolded, came forth triumphant from these conflicts, we see the truth of those words of the Christian philosopher which we selected for the motto of our work,—that all oppositions find themselves resolved and reconciled in Christ.

Since then, the development of Christian doctrine can only be rightly understood by taking into view its conflict with the heresies, we must first turn our attention to the consideration of these phenomena.

### *Heretical Tendencies.*

What were the two chief tendencies of the heretical spirit will appear by considering the relation of Christianity to the previous religious development of mankind. Christianity was the new creation which had its germ in Judaism. In common with Judaism, it possessed not only the character of a revealed religion, as opposed to the religion of nature in heathenism, but also the basis of a theocracy, and yet it was something entirely new. It was in short a principle which aimed at the transformation of all that existed. The least among those who shared in this new creation was to be greater than the greatest among the prophets. It was at once the dissolution and the fulfilment of Judaism. To a right understanding, therefore, of Christianity, it was essential that both these relations should be rightly apprehended. It would be requisite to see how, while Judaism was to meet with its fulfilment in Christianity, at the same time the distinct religious principle which Judaism had till now maintained was to be dissolved. Christianity must be rightly understood, both in its close connection with the preparatory elements of Judaism, and

also in its opposition to the same. According as either the opposition was lost sight of in the intimate connection, or the intimate connection was overlooked in the opposition, two opposing tendencies to error might arise. And in these main directions of the heretical spirit we shall easily trace the influence of the two contrary elements of culture which were attracted by Christianity—the antagonism of the Jewish and of the Hellenic mind. As the new spirit which Christ introduced into humanity was at first covered and hidden beneath the old forms of Judaism, which it was afterwards to destroy by its own inherent power; as it was from their previous religious principles that the Jews passed to a knowledge of Jesus as the Messiah promised in the Old Testament, it naturally happened that in their minds the doctrine of Christ was blended with their previous Judaism. Accordingly they expected that the development of Christianity, like its first manifestation, should be invested in the forms of Judaism, and so required that what was merely a passing moment should be retained as of lasting obligation. The free Greek spirit, on the other hand, which struggled hardest beneath the yoke of the law, was most strongly attracted by that particular in the appearance of Christ and in Christianity which most directly opposed the restraints of Judaism. It therefore would be tempted to apprehend Christianity simply as a religion opposed to Judaism; to deny absolutely the fact of their common divine foundation; to explain the connection between them as merely accidental; and to overlook the more profound and necessary inner connection and the higher unity which existed between the two religions. Indeed, as early as the time of St. Paul, we may perceive the germ of this opposition—the opposition, that is, between those who maintained exclusively the authority of the apostles of Palestine, and those who attached themselves exclusively to the Apostle St. Paul,—between those who remained in bondage to the Jewish law, and those who gloried in their Christian freedom and higher knowledge.\* The same opposition appears still more strongly developed by the times of St. John;† and from it arose afterwards the opposition between the Judaizing and the Gnostic views of Christianity. When this opposition attains to its full development, it of all others most deeply affects the entire apprehension of Christianity, and extends alike to all its

\* See my *Apostol. Zeitalter*, Bd. I. S. 314, ff.

† *Id.* Bd. II. S. 532, ff.



ethical and all its dogmatic elements. The first of these mental tendencies cleaves to the temporal earthly form of manifestation alone, without divining the higher spirit which is embodied and hidden beneath it; the other disdains that temporal form of manifestation, although it is the necessary medium for the appropriation of the spirit, and would have the spirit without its external medium. The one adheres to the letter, without penetrating to the revelation of the spirit; the other thinks to grasp the spirit without the letter. The one sees nothing in Christ but the Son of man; the other, nothing but the Son of God;—and so in Christianity the one would have only the human element without the divine; the other, the divine alone without the human. The last antithesis is of the utmost importance with regard to the essence of Christian morality. For as this presupposes the oneness of the Son of God and the Son of man in Christ, so the ennobling of the entire man, as the form of manifestation of the divine life, is the principle of it, and that which flows directly from this assumption.

Of these two main tendencies, we shall now proceed to consider, first, the one which exhibited itself in the Judaizing sects.

*The Judaizing Sects.*

This heretical tendency, as is clear from what has been already said, is the oldest that interfered with the regular development of Christianity. Fixing itself on Christianity at the very spot of its birth, it gradually extended itself. That which was but crude and imperfect, and constituted the first necessary link in the chain of development, set itself first of all in opposition to the progressive movement which Christianity aimed at; and then that which was in its right place at the beginning, giving itself out to be the end and the aim, asserted its own validity against the free development of the spirit when it burst from the shell in which it had been previously confined; till at last the same carnal and narrow Jewish principle, which, after showing its hostility to Christianity by decided unbelief, received Christianity indeed, but after its own fashion, taking up, that is, the shell instead of the kernel;—when that same carnal mind, to which our Saviour's sublime words had so often been a stone of stumbling, believed his words in part, it is true, but again betrayed itself

by misconstruing their meaning,—by interpreting them according to the letter, and not according to the spirit. However, it is necessary carefully to distinguish the different gradations in this tendency, from what was merely an imperfect and subordinate stage of Christian knowledge up to that which is properly heresy.

We must bear in mind that the faith in Jesus as the promised Messiah was the fundamental doctrine on which the whole edifice of the church was raised. Accordingly, the first Christian church was formed of very heterogeneous materials. It was composed of such as differed from other Jews only by acknowledging Jesus to be the Messiah, but who were still bound to the same contracted Jewish notions as before; and of such as, coming to know Jesus more and more as the Messiah in a high and spiritual sense, and surrendering themselves with docility to the spirit of Christ under the inworking of that spirit, were ever growing in their Christian knowledge, and were continually more and more set free from their besetting errors. These heterogeneous elements, which, in the first churches that were formed among the Jews, were united outwardly rather than inwardly, must, in the progressive development, be separated more and more from each other. The sifting process of time must effect a separation between those who had really been touched with the spirit of Christianity and those who still belonged more truly to Judaism. To this necessary separation we may apply the words of St. Paul, 1 Corinth. xi. 19, and of St. John, 1 Ep. ii. 19.

As Christ himself had faithfully observed the Mosaic law, so at first the faithful observance of it was retained by all believers, and was held to be a necessary condition of participating in the Messiah's kingdom. After the preparatory labours of Stephen the martyr, and of other men of Hellenistic origin and education, and of Peter, that which Christ intended, when he said that he was not come to destroy the law but to fulfil it, and when he called himself the Lord of the Sabbath—that which he meant by the worship of God, no longer confined to any particular time [?] or place, but in spirit and in truth,—the essence of the new spiritual creation, which is grounded in the resurrection of Christ,\* was clearly

\* Following the Pauline train of thought. As the risen Christ possesses a life raised above the dominion of nature, the στοιχία τοῦ κόσμου so too the spiritual life of those who are spiritually risen with him is



conceived and expressed by the Apostle Paul, and an independent Christian church, wholly unconnected with Judaism, was formed among the Gentiles. Already a schism appeared to be imminent between the two elements of which the Christian church was composed,—the prevailing notion of Christianity in Palestine, with its decided leaning to the Old Testament, which kept the new spirit still enveloped in the old forms of Judaism; and the independent development among the Gentile churches founded by St. Paul. By the compromise entered into between the two parties at Jerusalem\* a reconciliation was effected, and this was the triumph of the idea of a catholic church, whose unity, grounded on the faith in Jesus as the one Saviour and Lord of all, was to suppress all subordinate differences of Jewish and Hellenic notions. But the more deeply seated opposition could not be overcome and set aside by any reconciliation thus outwardly brought about. It was soon called forth again by the power with which the Apostle Paul established the principles of a more liberal view of Christianity, and by the success and rapid extension of his labours among the Gentiles, which excited the jealousy of the pharisaic party among the Jewish Christians. In opposition to Paul, whom they refused to acknowledge as an apostle, whom they accused of corrupting the doctrines of Christ, arose that party of Jewish Christians,—zealots according to the pharisaic spirit,—which was not until afterwards distinguished by a common name. At the time when this opposition had become most violent St. Paul was removed from the field of his earthly labours. Then came the conciliatory labours of the Apostle St. John in Asia Minor, by which many of the points of difficulty were removed; but still the opposition, in points in which it had been most strongly marked, could not be wholly suppressed.

In the middle of the second century we still find, among the Christians of Jewish descent, the two parties which arose in the apostolic age; as is evident from a passage in Justin Martyr's dialogue with Trypho.† Two classes are here men-

raised above the dominion of nature; their religion is a religion emancipated from the elements of the world, altogether free, and thenceforth bound to no outward circumstances whatever.

\* See on this subject my *Apostol. Zeitalter*, Bd. I. S. 169, ff.

† Ed. Colon. f. 266, to which, in many respects, important passage we shall again have occasion to advert.

tioned,—those who in their own practice united the observance of the Mosaic law with a faith in Christ, but without exacting the same observance of believing Gentiles, whom they acknowledged as true Christian brethren and accounted worthy of all brotherly fellowship, notwithstanding that they maintained their original Christian freedom,\*—and those who, not content with observing the Mosaic law themselves, wished to force the observance of it on all the Gentile converts, and refused to have fellowship with them on any other terms; proceeding herein on the assumption that the *believing* Gentiles, like all others, were *unclean*, and that without keeping the Mosaic law no man could be just before God.† Of the Jewish converts, the former were the genuine apostolical Christians, who remained faithful to the henoticon or compact made at Jerusalem; the latter belonged to that party with whose influence among the churches of the Gentiles the Apostle St. Paul had so often to struggle.

As the destruction of Jerusalem and the abolition of the temple-worship could not shake the faith of the Jews at large in the perpetual validity of their religious laws, so neither can it be said that the attachment to the Mosaic law of those who had embraced Christianity was thereby diminished. They regarded these events, no doubt, as a divine punishment sent upon the mass of their nation for their hostility to Christ, and for that wicked disposition which had caused his death; and many among them were looking for a glorious restoration of the city and of the temple to the faithful among the people. Those, indeed, that were not finally drawn away by their Jewish way of thinking, on which had been grafted a mere superficial faith in Jesus as the Messiah, to relapse altogether into Judaism,‡—the *more genuine* among the Jewish Christians who were at Jerusalem at the breaking out of the Roman war,—

\* As Justin reports of them in the passage above referred to: Αἰροῦνται συζῆν τοῖς Χριστιανοῖς καὶ πιστοῖς, μὴ πείθοντες αὐτοὺς μήτε περιτέμνισθαι ὁμοίως αὐτοῖς, μήτε σαββατίζειν, μήτε ἄλλα ὅσα τοιαῦτά ἐστι τηρεῖν.

† Justin's words: Ἐὰν δὲ οἱ ἀπὸ τοῦ γένους τοῦ ὑμετέρου (the race of the Jews) πιστεύουσιν λέγοντες ἐπὶ τοῦτον τὸν Χριστὸν, ἐκ παντὸς κατὰ τὸν διὰ Μωσέως διαταχθέντα νόμον ἀναγκάζωσι ζῆν τοὺς ἐξ ἔθνων πιστεύοντας ἢ μὴ κοινωνεῖν αὐτοῖς τῆς τοιαύτης συνδιαγωγῆς αἰσῶνται.

‡ A change very easily accounted for, and one which Justin notices in the passage above referred to: Τοὺς ὁμολογήσαντας καὶ ἐπιγνόντας τοῦτον εἶναι τὸν Χριστὸν καὶ ἡτινιοῦν αἰτίᾳ μεταβάντας ἐπὶ τὴν ἔννομον πολιτείαν, ἀρνησαμένους ὅτι οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ Χριστός.



could feel no sympathy with the fanaticism which this war brought along with it; and, remembering the admonitory, warning, and threatening words of Christ, could hardly fail to foresee, in the issue of this war, the divine punishment on their perverse nation which He had predicted. It may, perhaps, have been the case that, as the prophetic voice was still occasionally heard in the Christian assemblies, some pious men were constrained to warn the assembled churches of the approaching destruction, and to call upon them to remove from the midst of the doomed people, and to repair to one of the ten cities in Peræa, on the eastern bank of the Jordan, known under the collective name of Decapolis.\* At a later period this church is said to have returned to Jerusalem. Until the time of the emperor Hadrian it was wholly composed of Christians of Jewish descent, who were distinguished from the Gentile Christians by their strict observance of the Mosaic law; though we have no reason to infer from this that there existed among them no other differences of religious tendency and opinion. Under Hadrian outward causes led to the substitution of another community of an altered shape in place of the original one. That emperor was induced, by the insurrection of the Jews under Barkochba, to exclude them entirely from the city of Jerusalem and its neighbouring territory. This prohibition must have extended to all native Jews, to all who had not, by their whole manner of life, utterly renounced their nationality. This community, therefore, could no longer subsist in this place in its ancient form. In this way in the heathen colony of *Ælia Capitolina*, which had been founded on the site of the ancient Jerusalem, a church was formed in which no trace of the observance of the Mosaic law was any longer to be found; in which there met together Christians of Gentile descent, and liberal-minded Jews who did not hesitate to put the pagans on an equal footing with themselves in respect to all matters of outward life. This church had for its bishop a Christian of Gentile origin, whose name was

\* Eusebius, l. III. c. 5: Κατά τινα χρησμόν τοῖς αὐτοῖσι δοκίμοις δι' ἀποκαλύψεως ἐκδοθέντα. In Epiphanius (*De mensur. et pond.* c. 15) the exaggeration of tradition has already converted this prophetic declaration into a revelation delivered by an angel. Without doubt, this whole account springs from some earlier source; perhaps a statement of Hegesippus. We have no sufficient reason for calling in question its truth.

Marcus.\* But this change had no influence on the other Jewish Christians. Those, therefore, who by a strict observance of the law continued to distinguish themselves from the Gentile Christians, and avoided all intercourse with them, would naturally become widely known, as a distinct sect. If the story, already alluded to, concerning the return of the original community from Pella to Jerusalem, is true, or even if the great majority of them did not still remain at Pella, this change in the constitution of the church would naturally lead those who held to the Mosaic law to separate themselves from the mixed community and to repair once more to Pella, where, down to the fifth century, a strictly Jewish-Christian church continued to exist. Now a superficial knowledge or consideration of these facts might easily lead some to place in one class all the Jewish Christians who agreed in observing the Mosaic law, without any regard to the differences subsisting among them. Accordingly, from the time of Irenæus, in whom we first meet with the name, they were designated by the common appellation of *Ebionites*.

Now, in the first place, with respect to the origin and the meaning of this term, the opinion certainly must be rejected which makes it a proper name, derived from the founder of the sect. This view first appears in the writings of the uncritical Tertullian, who, ignorant of Hebrew, and consequently of the true signification of the word, took it for a proper name. And because other sects were named after their founders, he supposed the same must be the case with this sect also. Epiphanius, who, it is true, had the advantage of Tertullian in being acquainted with Hebrew, but who was however equally uncritical, adopted this opinion without further inquiry. And yet he himself quotes another derivation of the word, quite inconsistent with this hypothesis, taken from its etymological signification, with which he was doubtless acquainted. Since the character of the party designated by this name was so very general, and the party itself embraced in it so many

\* Eusebius, l. IV. c. 6. See also the remarkable words of Sulpicius Severus, who, after citing the prohibition of the emperor Hadrian, goes on to say (hist. sacr. l. II. c. 31), Quod quidem christianæ fidei proficiebat, quia tum pæne omnes Christum Deum sub legis observatione credebant. Nimirum id, Domino ordinante, dispositum, ut legis servitus a libertate fidei atque ecclesiæ tolleretur; where this writer has perhaps ascribed too much to the event.



different shades of the Judaizing principle which alone they held in common; since moreover, as appears from our previous remarks, the general tendency denoted by this name could hardly fail to pass from Judaism into Christianity in the historical course of its development, the origin of this party from any single individual would seem improbable. We might, indeed, suppose that this name had originally been applied to a distinct sect belonging to this general class, and founded by a man who had some peculiar views of his own; and that, at some later period, the term received a more extensive application. But we have no warrant whatever for any such supposition; for the tradition of a founder of the sect of the name of Ebion is not supported by any weighty historical evidence. All better informed authorities, such as Irenæus and Origen, know nothing of such a person; and all that we find anywhere said respecting the pretended Ebion is very vague and indefinite. Origen was the first to give the correct derivation of this name, from the Hebrew word עֲבִיּוֹן, *poor*. These Jewish Christians, then, were called the poor; but now the question arises, *in what sense* was this appellation originally applied to them? And with this is connected another—by whom was this name first given them? Upon the answer to these questions it depends whether the appellation is to be understood as a term of reproach or of praise. Now it appears, it is true, from an explanation which Epiphanius cites from the mouths of the Ebionites themselves,\* that in his time they regarded it as an epithet which they had given themselves. But although the Ebionites did accept the name, it might nevertheless be quite consistent with this fact that it was originally bestowed on them by their adversaries, but was afterwards adopted by themselves, either in the same or a different sense. Since what was considered by their opponents a term of reproach might on their own principles be regarded as a title of honour.

Origen, who, as we have said, first furnished the correct explanation of the word, applies the designation “poor” to the meagreness of the religious system, the poverty of faith, that characterized this party.† In this sense Gentile Chris-

\* Hæres. 30.

† Orig. in Matth. T. XVI. c. 12: Τῶ ἐβιωνίῳ καὶ πτωχεύοντι περὶ τῆς εἰς Ἰησοῦν πίστεως. It was hardly Origen's intention in *this* place to give an etymological explanation; he merely alludes, *after his usual way*, to

tians may have applied the term to them; but then it is not likely that they would have chosen a Hebrew word to express this character. It is far more natural to suppose that the inventors of this name were Jews; and on their principles it might be used to denote a poor, meagre way of thinking, especially if, according to the ingenious suggestion of a distinguished modern inquirer in this province,\* we suppose that, in the mouth of those Jews who were expecting a Messiah in *visible glory*, it designated such as could believe in a *lowly and crucified Messiah*. Yet this explanation even, taken by itself, does not seem the most simple and natural; and, indeed, the author of it himself joins it with another which we shall presently mention. Why should we not understand this word in its literal and obvious sense, as a designation of the *poorer* class among the people? We know, in fact, that by the hierarchical party among the Jews this reproach was from the beginning cast upon the Christian faith, because none but those belonging to the ignorant and poorer class had openly professed it (John vii. 49); and a similar objection was made to Christianity by the Gentiles.† Thus it may be explained how the Christians among the Jews came to be designated as *the poor*; and how this name, which by them was employed to designate the Christians generally, would afterwards be used by the Gentile Christians, in ignorance of the true meaning of the term, to designate that portion of believers who were distinguished from the rest by their observance of the Mosaic law. And, what serves to confirm our conjecture, we find that this did actually happen in the case of another name, that of "Nazarenes," which was originally a common appellation for all Christians among the Jews.

When the extreme form of Ebionism was looked at, such as it may have been exhibited among the great mass of believing Jews, it might, perhaps, be said of it with justice that there was little, as Origen expresses himself,‡ to distinguish its followers from the common Jews, who adhered strictly to the

the meaning of the name. Yet (c. Cels. l. II. c. 1) he says expressly, Ἐπάνυμοι τῆς κατὰ τὴν ἐκδοχὴν πτωχείας τοῦ νόμου.

\* Dr. Gieseler in the Archiv für alte und neue Kirchengeschichte von Stäudlin und Tzschirner, Bd. IV., 2tes Stück, S. 307.

† See the first section.

‡ In Matth. T. XI. s. 12: Οἱ σωματικοὶ Ἰουδαῖοι; καὶ οἱ ὀλίγοι διαφέροντες αὐτῶν Ἑβραῖοι.



mere letter of the Old Testament. We see in them the natural descendants of those zealous opponents of the Apostle St. Paul who never ceased to calumniate him as an apostate from the law.\* They disseminated false and malicious reports respecting the life of this apostle, in order to account by impure motives for his abandonment of Judaism. Later Ebionites at least scrupled not to assert that he was a proselyte of heathenish descent.† In Christianity they saw at most only the completion of Judaism by the addition of a few isolated precepts, in which light, probably, they explained the Sermon on the Mount, which can only be rightly understood in its connection with the whole of Christianity. Their views of the work and of the character of Christ, of the essence of Christianity, and the person of its author, were closely connected with each other.

In both respects we recognise among Ebionites the contracted range of the ordinary Jewish point of view. As they could not understand the specific difference between Judaism and Christianity, so neither could they understand what it was that distinguished the author of Christianity from Moses and the prophets, and from the founders of other religions. As they looked upon him, not as the Redeemer of all mankind, by whom every other means of justification and atonement had been abrogated as superfluous,—not as the author of a new creation of the divine life, but only as the supreme Lawgiver, Teacher, and King,—they did not feel themselves constrained to admit any higher view of Christ's person. On this account, therefore, they were disqualified to understand his discourses. They firmly maintained the dogma of an irreconcilable enmity between the Creator and his material creation, which had been taught by a stern monotheistic system of legal Judaism in opposition to the polytheistic and pantheistic principles of religions of nature. To Jesus they simply transferred the notion of the Messiah which most widely prevailed among the Jews, and which most agreed with this common principle of

\* Origen (Hom. XVIII. in Jerem. s. 12), says, *Καὶ μέχρι νῦν Ἑβιωναῖοι τύπτουσι τὸν ἀπόστολον Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ λόγοις δυσφήμοις.*

† Vid. Epiphan. hæres. 30, s. 25. Perhaps in this respect also these Ebionites followed the example of their predecessors, with whom St. Paul had to contend; it is perhaps to some such malicious perversion of facts that the apostle is looking when, in speaking of various events in his earlier life, he protests to the truth of what he utters, and when he lays so much stress on the fact of his Jewish origin and his education in the schools of the Pharisees.

the Jewish system,—that he was a man distinguished above all others for legal piety,—who for this very reason had been deemed worthy to be chosen the Messiah, — who of his special call to the Messiahship knew no more than others, who were far from divining it in his case, until Elias reappeared and revealed to him and to others his election, when he was filled with divine power for the Messianic office, by means of which he was enabled to work miracles.\* What was generally believed of the Elias, these Ebionites transferred to John the Baptist. When Jesus came with others to John to be baptized by him, then, and not before, occurred the miraculous phenomenon by which his election to the Messiahship was revealed, and at the same time the divine power which he required for the fulfilment of his mission descended on him. A marked distinction was thus drawn between two portions of the life of Jesus,—before and after his consecration to the Messiahship. In the first they acknowledged nothing but the mere human nature, to the entire exclusion of everything supernatural; while the sudden accruing of the supernatural and the sensuously objective element was prominently insisted on in the events which took place at the very beginning of the second portion. The fact of Christ's supernatural birth was especially irreconcilable with this view of the matter; and indeed this fact was directly at variance with the Jewish principle generally, presenting to their minds a certain heathenish aspect of the same class with the myths concerning the sons of the gods.† Even in the well-known passage of the seventh chapter of Isaiah the Ebionites could not see the announcement of the birth from a virgin.‡

\* The Jew Trypho, in Justin,—Dial. c. Tryph. f. 291, ed. Colon.—expresses this common Jewish point of view, where he requires of the Christians to prove, concerning Jesus, "Ὅτι αὐτός ἐστιν ὁ Χριστός, διὰ τὸ ἐνόμως καὶ τελείως πολιτεύεσθαι αὐτὸν κατηξιώσθαι τοῦ ἐκκληῆναι εἰς Χριστόν. Respecting the appearance of Elias, whereby the Messiah was first to be made known as such to himself and to others, see f. 268, compared with 336.

† See what the Jew Tryphon (in Justin M. f. 291) says against this doctrine: Μὴ τερατολογεῖν πολυμάτε, ὅπως μήτε ὁμοίως τοῖς Ἑλλήσι μωραίνειν ἐλέγχῃσθε.

‡ The position assumed by the Ebionites led to a dispute about the interpretation of this and several other prophetic passages. Where men were usually satisfied by allegorical interpretation, the Ebionites, as following the Jewish doctrines, may, by entering more deeply into the meaning of words, into the connection, and the historical allusions, have sought to show how many things which were referred by Christian



In the Ebionitic revision of the gospel history, which was based upon one of the principal gospels referable to the Apostle St. Matthew, the appearance at Christ's baptism is represented as an altogether outward, sensible event, connected with the descent of the Holy Ghost upon Christ; and this appearance is interpreted as having for its design to lead Christ himself to the consciousness of his Messianic vocation, no less than to reveal this fact to the Baptist. This phenomenon is decked out with miraculous events; light shone over the place, fire burst forth from the Jordan.\* In the estimation of the Ebionites Jerusalem was still to be the city of God, the central seat of the Theocracy.† They lived in expectation of Christ's speedy return to restore this city of God, and to reëstablish the Theocracy there in surpassing splendour. All the Jewish notions respecting the Messiah's millennial reign they transferred to this event.‡

We have remarked already that among the Ebionites, if we consider this name as the general one for Judaizing Christians, there must have existed many different shades in the combination of the Jewish with the Christian point of view. Irenæus indeed knew nothing of them; but Origen, who was more accustomed to trace points of resemblance and difference, and had, moreover, been long resident in Palestine, distinguishes two classes of Ebionites, one denying the supernatural birth of Jesus, and another admitting it.§ When we duly consider how obstinately the ordinary Jewish ideas must have struggled against the acknowledgment of such a fact, we must conclude

teachers to the history of Christ had been already accomplished in the facts and appearances of earlier history. We may hence explain, perhaps, what Irenæus objects to them (lib. I. c. 26), *Quæ autem sunt prophetica, curiosius (περισσευομένως) exponere nituntur*.

\* See the fragment of the gospel of the Hebrews, in Epiphanius. Hæres. 30, s. 13, and Justin, Dial. c. Tryph., f. 315, ed. Colon.

† Hierosolymam adorant, quasi domus sit Dei. Iren. I. I. c. 26, s. 2.

‡ See, in the Jewish-Christian work, the Testament of the twelve patriarchs (Testament IV. of Judah, s. 23), the return of the scattered Jews from their captivity; and in Testament VII. of Dan. s. 5: "Jerusalem shall then suffer desolation no more, and Israel no more be carried into captivity; for the Lord shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, and walk with men."

§ Orig. c. Cels. l. V. c. 61, where he employs the name Ebionites to designate generally all Jewish Christians observing the Mosaic law: Οἱ διττοὶ Ἑβριωνᾶιοι, ἥτοι ἐκ παρθένου ὁμολογοῦντες, ὁμοίως ἡμῖν, τὸν Ἰησοῦν, ἢ οὐχ' οὕτω γεννηθῆναι, ἀλλ' ὡς τοὺς λοιποὺς ἀνθρώπους.

that connected with this deviation from the general sentiments of the Jews were also other differences; that those who could bring themselves to admit the fact above mentioned must have been somewhat deeply imbued with the spirit of the new creation. It seems implied by it that they did not, like the others, separate the divine from the human nature in Christ, merely acknowledging in him a suddenly commencing operation of the Holy Spirit, but that they assumed a certain coöperation of the divine and human elements, whereby he differed in kind from all other prophets,—a certain original actuation of the divine Spirit, under whose influences the human nature in him, as it took its being, so it continued to develop itself. As they were less fettered on this point by the Jewish spirit, so they may also have been more free in their judgments as to the continued obligation of the Mosaic law, and willing, consequently, to make a distinction between the position of the native Jews and that of believers from among the Gentiles. We may recognise in them the Jewish Christians, followers of apostolical principles, whom Justin Martyr describes as a class still subsisting in his days. To the same class belonged, probably, the people about whom Jerome took pains to obtain more accurate information during his residence in those countries towards the close of the fourth century. They then dwelt at Berœa, in Syria,\* and passed by the name of Nazarenes. This name, like that of the Ebionites, was originally perhaps a common appellation among the Jews for all Christians, as a sect springing from Nazareth, and still more common than the former, to judge from Acts xxiv. 5, and from the fact that in still later times all Christians were condemned under this name in the Jewish synagogues.†

These Nazarenes were distinguished by their decided opposition to the Pharisees. They spoke against the maxims of the scribes and Pharisees, who had caused the people to err by their traditions, and had hindered them from believing in Jesus.‡ In explaining Isaiah viii. 23 (ix. 1. Eng. ver.) they taught that by the preaching of Christ in Galilee the Jews had been first delivered from the errors of the scribes and Pharisees, and

\* Vid. Hieronym. de viris illustrib. c. 3.

† Ejusd. commentar. in Isai. l. II. c. 5 to 5, 18.

‡ Vid. Hieronym. commentar. in Isai. l. IX. c. 29, v. 18, ed. Vallarsi, T. IV. p. 398.



from the burthensome yoke of the Jewish traditions; and they interpreted chapter ix. 1 (ix. 2) as referring to the preaching of the gospel by the Apostle St. Paul to all Gentile nations.\* It appears, therefore, that, differing entirely from those Ebionites who were hostile to this apostle, they acknowledged his call to be an apostle to the Gentiles, and consequently were not disposed to force the latter to observe the Mosaic law. And so, in fact, we find that Jerome distinguishes from the Ebionites the Ebionitarum socii, who considered all this to be permanently binding only on those of Jewish descent.† They mourned over their unbelieving nation, and earnestly longed for the time when these also should turn and believe in the Lord and his apostles. Then they would put aside all their idols, which had led them into the devious ways of sin. Then every obstacle to God's kingdom which Satan had set up would be removed, not by human might, but by the power of God; and all who had hitherto been guiding themselves in their own wisdom would become converted to the Lord. This they believed was promised in Isaiah xxxi. 7, 8.‡

The view of Christ which we have been led to suppose prevailed among those who, according to Origen, made the second class of Ebionites, we should perhaps be warranted to ascribe also to *these* Nazarenes. For that they did not make the divine element in Christ to begin first of all with his inauguration to the Messiahship seems evident from the fact that the recension of the Hebrew gospel, which Jerome received from them and translated into Latin, did not, like the gospel of the other party, commence with the inauguration of Christ as the Messiah, by John the Baptist, but also contained the first chapters, which treat of the birth of Christ.§ He is described by them as the One towards whom the progressive development of the Theocracy tended from the beginning—as the end and aim of all the earlier divine revelations. In him the Holy Spirit, from whom, before this time, only isolated reve-

\* See Jerome's remarks on those passages, l. c. p. 130, ed. Vallarsi.

† L. c. l. I. c. I. p. 21.

‡ See Jerome's remarks on this passage, l. c. p. 425. In the edition of Martianay, T. III.—the places, pp. 79, 83, 250, and 261.

§ As appears both from Jerome's commentary on St. Matthew, chapter ii., at the beginning; where by the *ipsum hebraicum* is doubtless to be understood, according to the context, the Hebrew gospel of the Nazarenes;—as also from the words which he cites from this gospel in his work *de viris illustrib.* c. 3.

lations and exhortations had proceeded, first found an abiding place of rest, a permanent abode. Inasmuch as the Holy Spirit was the productive principle of his entire nature, and it was from Him that the operation of the Spirit must first proceed in order to shape the entire life of humanity and to form other organs of action, he is called the First-born of the Holy Spirit—as the Holy Spirit is also denominated his Mother.\* Where this gospel describes how the whole fountain of the Holy Spirit descended on Christ at his baptism and abode permanently with him, the following words of salutation are ascribed to the former:—"My Son, in all the prophets I expected thee, that thou shouldest come, and I might find in thee a place of rest; for thou art my resting-place, thou art my first-born Son, who reignest for ever."† Assuredly in this whole passage we perceive a profound Christian consciousness rising above the limited views of the common Ebionitism. And the appellation given to the Holy Spirit, of Mother of Christ, may perhaps in some way stand connected with the idea of his supernatural generation.

It appears, from what has been said, that although an extreme Ebionism excluded all speculations concerning the divine nature in Christ, yet still, where it assumed a milder and more liberal form, as it did in the instance just described, such speculations might also be united with it. Again, we must not forget,—what we have already considered more at length in the general Introduction,—that at this period Judaism had been broken up into manifold and even conflicting elements, and that some of these had become blended with

\* See the passages cited by Jerome, in Micham, l. II. c. 7, T. VI. p. 520; and by Origen, T. II. Joh. s. 6, in which Christ says, "Ἄρτι ἔλαβί με ἡ μήτηρ μου, τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα, ἐν μιᾷ τῶν τριχῶν μου, καὶ ἀπένεγκέ με εἰς τὸ ὄρος τὸ μέγα Θαβώρ; where it may be a question whether the thought is merely expressed in a poetic form, that Christ repaired thither by the impulse of the Holy Spirit, which animated him in all things, or whether a supernatural conveyance is meant. That the passage is to be understood in the former way, and not literally, appears probable when we compare it with the similar figurative modes of expression in an oriental writer. In Taberistanensis annales regum atque legatorum Dei, Voi. II. Pars I. Gryph. 1835, page 103, it is said by those whom God had converted from being enemies of Mahomet into zealous advocates of his cause (in Kosegarten's Latin translation from the Arabic original), "Denique Deus cordibus cincinnisque nostris prehensis, per eum in viam rectam ita nos direxit, ut eum sequeremur."

† Vid. Hieronym. in Isai. l. IV. c. 11. T. IV. p. 156.



many tendencies foreign to their original principles. Such, then, might easily be attracted by Christianity also, and might seek to adopt it in their own way. If at first pharisaical views were mixed with their apprehension of Christianity, they were afterwards followed by others more nearly related to Essenism, or to the Alexandrian system. As soon as the Apostle St. Paul had been removed from his sphere of labour, in which his commanding influence opposed an invincible bulwark to all corruptions of Christian truth, such impure mixtures of doctrine were formed first of all in Asia Minor, for the earliest example we find of it is in the church of Colosse, in Phrygia. Similar phenomena are also to be recognised in much which Epiphanius comprises under the general name of Ebionism,—phenomena which are wholly distinct from the Ebionism that sprang out of the common Pharisaic elements, and the origin of which would assuredly carry us back to an earlier period than that in which Epiphanius wrote. Among the Ebionites described by Epiphanius there were those who started from that common Ebionitic view of Jesus as a man who was raised to the dignity of Messiah on account of his legal piety; but then, whilst others affirmed that the whole power of the Holy Spirit descended on him at his consecration to the Messiahship by the baptism of John, they substituted, in place of the Holy Spirit, the highest of the Spirits created by God, a spirit exalted above all the angels,\*—and the latter was then considered the true revealer of God, the Messiah in the highest sense. By means of such a separation of the divine and human natures in Christ, the Ebionitic element might pass into the Gnostic. Others placed in connection with Christianity that idea which exhibits itself to us under so many different forms, taking sometimes an Oriental, sometimes an Hellenic stamp,—the idea of a heavenly man, the Adam Kadmon, the primal man. The Spirit, which is the pure efflux of the divine Spirit, which, having first appeared in Adam, returned afterwards, under manifold shapes, to reveal God to

\* So says Epiphanius: Οὐ φάσκουσιν ἐκ Θεοῦ πατρὸς αὐτὸν γενήσθαι, ἀλλὰ ἐκτίσθαι ὡς ἓνα τῶν ἀρχαγγέλων, μίζονα δὲ αὐτῶν ὄντα, αὐτὸν δὲ κυριεύειν πᾶν ἀγγέλων καὶ πάντων ὑπὸ τοῦ παντοκράτορος πεποιημένων. So Philo describes the Logos as an ἀρχάγγελος. Comp. the Jewish apocryphal work, Ἰωσήφ προσευχή: Πρωτόγονος παντὸς ζώου ζωουμένου ὑπὸ Θεοῦ.

his fallen children, reappeared in Christ to deliver the last revelation to humanity.

We have no warrant for supposing, in all the various tendencies which have been designated by the common name of Ebionitism, the same degree of adherence to the law of Moses. There had, in truth, as we saw in the example of the Sadducees, been evolved among the Jews themselves, out of opposition to the traditional element of Pharisaism, parties whose aim was to distinguish the original religion of Moses from the later additions to it. This distinction, however, might assume different forms, according to the different mental tendencies it proceeded from. An entirely different character from that which it took among the Sadducees must it have assumed where it started from a mystico-ascetic bias, which, foreign to the original Hebraism, had, under the influence of Oriental ideas, formed itself out of that which was the essential element of Judaism as distinct both from Pharisaism and Sadduceeism. Out of this there had sprung up the conception of a spiritual, primitive religion, which, at some later period, had been corrupted by foreign elements; and among these corruptions was reckoned whatever was at variance with this mystico-ascetic tendency. One sect among the Ebionites, as we learn from Epiphanius,\* forbade the eating of flesh as well as the offering of animals, and declared the entire sacrificial worship to be alien from primitive Judaism, and a corruption. Christianity, contemplated from this point of view, must have been considered as a restoration of the original Judaism. From this sect proceeds a book under the name of Jacob, ἀναβαθμοὶ Ἰακώβου, Steps of Jacob (probably intended to denote the steps of initiation with reference to the true Gnosis), in which Jacob is introduced speaking against sacrifices and the worship of the temple. With this ascetical tendency was connected the total renunciation of earthly possessions — complete poverty — as an essential part of religious perfection; whether, even before the appearance of Christianity, such a tendency had sprung up among the Jews out of opposition to the worldly spirit in Judaism (just as the societies of spiritual paupers, the aposto-

\* Whether, as Epiphanius alleges, a person, otherwise unknown, by the name of Elxai, exercised great influence in bringing about this modification of Ebionitism, we must leave undetermined. In the formation of a religious tendency of this kind, very little depends, in any case, on the personality of an individual.



lici, the *pauperes de Lugduno*, sprang up, during the middle ages, out of a similar opposition), or whether this tendency was first called forth by a partial and imperfect apprehension of the Christian principle.\* In a manner altogether foreign to the original Hebrew, the Jewish spirit nevertheless manifested itself by its outward conception of the opposition betwixt the kingdom of the Messiah and the kingdom of Satan, as if the two were outwardly divided in the world, and the *present* earthly world belonged wholly to Satan, whilst the future had been committed to Christ. Those, therefore, who wished to share the future kingdom of the Messiah must look upon all the goods of this world as alien from them, and renounce every earthly possession. The members of this sect were glad to call themselves Ebionites, as the poor in spirit; and they derived this hereditary name from the circumstance that their fathers, who formed the first church at Jerusalem, renounced all rights of private property, and lived in an unconditional community of goods.† The question whether this explanation of the term be the correct one depends on another,—whether the name, having been employed originally to designate only a smaller portion of the Ebionites, afterwards obtained a more general application, or whether, the extensive signification already noticed being the earlier one, this interpretation of it was first introduced by the peculiar modification of the Ebionitic spirit above described.

But amidst this ascetical tendency, however, we discern a reaction of the original Hebraism in the fact that this sect combated an undue estimate of the merit of celibacy; recommending, on the contrary, early marriage, as was customary among the Jews, as a preservative against unchastity. This party must therefore have been opposed to those ascetical tendencies in the Christian church which were in favour of a life of celibacy.‡

The peculiar Ebionitic tendency here described § appears in

\* See above, page 382.

† This laudatory sense of the epithet אֲבִיּוֹן is referred to also in the words of Testamentum VII. in the Testaments of the twelve patriarchs (c. 5), where it is said, respecting the form of government in the perfected kingdom of the Messiah, "Ἁγίος Ἰσραὴλ βασιλεύων ἐπ' αὐτοὺς ἐν ταπεινώσει καὶ ἐν πτωχείᾳ."

‡ So we may remark a similar opposition, proceeding from the same spiritual bent, among the Zabians, or the so-called disciples of John.

§ Epiphanius speaks of these Ebionites as a party still existing in his

a very remarkable apocryphal book called the Clementines, or the Eighteen Homilies,\* in which, as it is pretended, Clement, descended from a noble family in Rome and afterwards bishop of the church in that city, gives an account of his conversion and of the discourses and disputes of the Apostle Peter.† It is difficult, indeed, to separate here what belongs to the general views of that particular sect of the Ebionites which we last described, from what must be reckoned the peculiarities of the author, as they developed themselves amid the conflicting opinions of the second century. At all events it is easy to see how a reference to these conflicting opinions might call forth a religious tendency and a work of this kind. While the Jews, the Judaizing and the Gentile Christians, were standing in stern opposition to each other, and when Judaism, attacked in various ways by the Gnostics, was exhibited in the most unfavourable light, the thought might naturally occur to some individual of this particular class of Ebionites to compose a work that might help to reconcile these opposite views. Accordingly, the work itself, of an apologetic and conciliatory tendency, forms a noticeable phenomenon in the ferment of that chaotic period, to which Christianity had communicated a new breath of life, which set everything in motion, and in which the most heterogeneous elements might be found blended together, so that what was really profound was mixed with what was altogether fantastic. The fundamental idea of the apologetic and conciliatory aims of this work is the idea of a simple and original religion, proceeding from divine revelation, as the common foundation both of Judaism and Christianity. The supranaturalist element of Judaism is here insisted on with peculiar stress. From the contemplation of so many

own time. It is certain that he had derived the information he gives us concerning them partly from personal intercourse with the sect, and partly from other works of theirs besides the Clementines. The Clementines presuppose the existence of such a sect,—not that the writer of that work should be regarded as the author of such a system.

\* *Ὁμιλίας.*

† I cannot omit to call the attention of the theological public to a work which we are soon to expect from one of the most distinguished of our young theologians, the candidate Adolph Schliemann of Rostock, on the origin, end, the peculiar religious views, and the composition of this remarkable book, which will also embrace a complete critical examination of all that has been hitherto advanced on a subject which of late has been so much discussed.



minds restlessly searching for truth and tortured with doubt,\* and of so many conflicting systems of philosophy, the author is convinced of the necessity of a divine revelation; without which man is certain of nothing but the most general principles of morality, such as the conviction that, as no one is willing to suffer wrong, so no one should do wrong.† Whoever *seeks* the truth evinces, by this very fact, that he is in need of some higher source from which to derive the knowledge of it. He is in want of a criterion by which to distinguish the truth; he holds that to be true which flatters his inclinations. Hence so many opposite systems. “He only who needs not to seek for the truth — he who has no doubts — he who learns the truth by means of a higher spirit dwelling within him, which is superior to all uncertainty and doubt — can reveal it to others.” Thus the author arrives at the conception of the true prophet, from whose revelations all religious truth is to be derived.‡ “Looking away from all others, men must confide in the prophet of truth alone, whom all, however ignorant they may be, can know as a prophet. God, who provides for the necessities of all, has made it easy for all, among Greeks or barbarians, to recognise him as such.” “The first prophet was Adam, in whom, if in any one, formed as he was immediately by the creative hand of God, that which is the immediate efflux of the Divine Spirit dwelt.” The doctrine of the fall of the first man is one which the author of the Clementines felt constrained to combat,§ as blasphemy against God.¶ “On the man created after his own image God, the alone good, bestowed everything. Full of the divinity of his Creator, and, as a true prophet, knowing all things, he revealed to his children an eternal law, which can neither be destroyed by wars, nor corrupted by godless power, nor hidden in any particular place, but may be read of all men.”¶¶ In

\* See Vol. I. p. 8.

† Hom. II. c. 6: Ἀληθείας κρατεῖν οὐ δυνατόν ἔσται, πλὴν πολιτείας μόνης, καὶ ταῦτα ἐκείνης τῆς διὰ τὸ εὖλογον γνωρισθῆναι δυναμένης, ἥτις ἐκάστω ἐκ τοῦ μὴ θίγειν ἀδικεῖσθαι, τοῦ μὴ δεῖν ἄλλον ἀδικεῖν τὴν γνώσιν παρίστησιν.

‡ Hom. II. c. 9.

§ Hom. III. c. 20 and 42.

¶ We should be better able to judge of the connection between this view and earlier Jewish doctrines, if a Jewish work were made known, from which Eisenmenger has cited (Theil. I. Kap. 8, s. 336), דְּרָגָהּ נִכְנָה, the *purity, innocence* of Adam, in which also it was asserted that Adam never sinned.

¶¶ Hom. VIII. c. 10: Νόμον αἰώνιον ᾧρισιν, ὅλοις (perhaps we should

reference to this general revelation of God, it was consistent in the author of the Clementines to assert "that the appearance neither of Jesus nor of Moses would have been necessary if men had been willing of themselves to know what is right" (what, *i. e.*, they must do in order to obtain God's favour—for everything depends on works).\* "But since this original revelation, which had to be transmitted orally from generation to generation, was continually corrupted by the admixture of impure elements proceeding from an evil principle" (a notion which, in this treatise, is closely connected with its pervading doctrine of the antagonism of the good and the evil principle in the whole world), "new revelations were requisite to counteract these corruptions, and to restore the matter of that original revelation; and it was always that primal Spirit of humanity, the Spirit of God in Adam, which, in manifold forms and under various names, reappeared,†—a mode of view falling in with the eclectic bent of this particular period, but from the oldest time perpetually recurring in the East, which regarded all religions as different forms of the manifestation of one divine principle or of one fundamental truth. Thus Moses constitutes one of these forms of manifestation, and the religious law proceeding from him is one of the new revelations which were to promote the restoration of primitive truth. The author of the Clementines belonged to that party of the Jews who exalted the Pentateuch above all the other books of the Old Testament. The Pentateuch alone passed with him as a book coming from divine revelation; yet he was far from acknowledging it as such in its whole extent. We see in him the first impugner of the genuineness of the Pentateuch; being in this, as in many other respects, a forerunner of far later phenomena: as also he availed himself of many of the arguments which, independently of him, were again brought

read ὅλως), μήτε ὑπὸ πολέμων ἱμνησθῆναι δυνάμενον, μηδ' ὑπὸ ἀσεβοῦς τινός; ὑπονοθεύμενον, μήτε ἐν τότῃ ἀποκεκρυμμένον, ἀλλὰ πᾶσι ἀναγνωσθῆναι δυνάμενον. It was doubtless the author's design to oppose this original, universal, eternal law, springing from the revelation of God's Spirit in the first man, to the Mosaic law recorded in the letter of scripture, which, as he endeavours in this work to show, must be liable to all those defects from which that higher law would be exempt.

\* Hom. VIII. c. 5: Οὐτε γὰρ ἂν Μωϋσείως, οὔτε τῆς τοῦ Ἰησοῦ παρουσίας χάρις ἦν. εἴπερ ἀφ' ἑαυτῶν τὸ εὐλογεῖν νηεῖν ἐβούλοντο.

† Hom. III. c. 20: "Ο; ἀπ' ἀρχῆς αἰῶνος, ἅμα τοῖς ὀνόμασιν μορφῶς ἀλλάσσω, τὸν αἰῶνα ποίει



forward by later disputers of the genuineness of this work. He maintained, for instance, that the Mosaic doctrine, which depended on oral tradition for its transmission, had been many times rewritten; and that, before the Pentateuch reached its latest form, various foreign elements, conflicting with the truth revealed by Moses, had been introduced by the influence of the principle which ever seeks to corrupt the divine revelation. Thus it was easy for the author to explain away as an interpolation whatever contradicted his own ascetical principles, as well as all that the opponents of Judaism among the Gentiles and the Gnostics objected to it. In those cases where the Jewish theologians of the Alexandrian school got rid of a difficulty by insisting that the letter was the mere envelope of an idea allegorically represented, the author of the Clementines would entirely remove the stone of stumbling by an exercise of criticism. To this he was driven by his principles, which were opposed to all allegorising shifts. He required of the prophet that he should express everything clearly, without ambiguity, simply and comprehensively. Such, it appeared to him, was the character of the discourses of Christ,\* though, in other respects, he indulges himself in extremely forced and tortuous interpretations to favour his own peculiar opinions.

The author of the Clementines required of the prophet that he should announce the truth in calmness of spirit, and in simple, clear, and unambiguous language. With this requisition agreed the notion he had formed of inspiration, and of the prophet's mental state. He rejected the platonic notion of an *ἐνθουσιασμός* corresponding to *μανία*—of an ecstatic state of the prophet, such as occurs in the Jewish theology of the Alexandrian school, and as lies at bottom of the legend respecting the origin of the Alexandrian version. In the *true* prophet he acknowledged no such state of ecstasy, in which, borne along by the might of a higher spirit animating him, the prophet announced things greater than he could himself understand. Such a state, he thinks, does not agree with the idea of the divine Spirit,—for this is a Spirit of peace and of order,—but it corresponded rather to the character of the demoniacal spirit, who is a spirit of confusion. States like those which might occur in pagan divination, and at the oracles, ought not to be transferred to the true prophet. If a prophet is impelled, sometimes by this and at other times by that spirit, and

\* Hom. III. c. 26: 'Πητὰ προφητεύει, σαθὴ λέγει.

announces at one time what the divine Spirit, and at another what his own spirit suggests, then there is need of a criterion by which to separate, in his discourse, the true from the false. In that case the prophet, who appeared for the restoration of the true religion, and from whom men were to learn to distinguish the genuine from the spurious in the earlier records of religion, would himself make the recurrence of such a separation again necessary. The author of the Clementines had a true perception of the fact that nothing analogous to the ecstasy is to be observed in the case of Christ; that the whole style in which he expresses himself testifies to a calm consciousness, always clear as to its own meaning, always self-possessed. But as it was the peculiar bent of *many*, in this period, to look everywhere alike for fulness and completion, to allow of no gradual transitions and intermediate steps, so the author of the Clementines requires, in all manifestations of prophecy, what belongs only to this complete conception of the prophetic office, as fulfilled in Christ. All else he sets down as false prophecy. The true prophet must be ever one with himself; like Christ, he must have with him the divine Spirit at all times alike.\* Now, as he could not apply this notion of prophecy to the prophets of the Old Testament; as he found in them much that was obscure, much asserted of the Messiah and his kingdom which, literally understood,—as everything announced by divine revelation should be understood,—did not agree with the appearance and conduct of Jesus as the Messiah; all this was to his mind a mark of a spurious prophetic spirit, designing to deceive. And so the Jews did, in fact, suffer themselves to be led astray by this ambiguous or false matter in the prophets, when they were looking for a worldly Messiah † with a terrestrial kingdom; when they expected in the Messiah the son of David, not the Son of God,‡ and therefore did not acknowledge *Jesus* as such.

We can well suppose that, when men of the peculiar spiritual bent which characterized the Essenes adopted the idea of the Messiah, they would on this side also present a contrast to the common Pharisaic conception of it, and would shape the idea in accordance with their own mystical and ascetical views.

\* Hom. VIII. c. 11 and 12.

† L. c. c. 22 and 23.

‡ Thus in Hom. XVIII. c. 13, the passage Matth. xi. 27, is explained as spoken in opposition to the Jews, who in the Messiah saw the son of David, and not the son of God.



Such a peculiar shaping of it forms the groundwork of the Clementines. That Ebionitic idea of spiritual poverty, of which we have spoken above; that striving after emancipation from the world so opposed to the worldliness of the religious sentiments of the great body of the Jews, of which Ebionitic spirit we perceive the traces in the Clementines, would naturally lead to a corresponding view of the Messiah and of his kingdom. Opposition to the secular and political element in the Jewish notion of the Messiah, and to the Chiliastic views, would necessarily spring out of it. And this we find to be the case with the Clementines. Now, as the author was unable to understand, in the successive steps of revelation, the historical organization in obedience to the law of constant progress—as he was incapable of comprehending the gradual expansion of the idea, unfolding itself, under the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit, out of its temporal envelope—he therefore sees in everything that borders on a secular idea of the Messiah, and on which the false expectation of the Jews had fastened itself, the pseudo-prophetic element.\*

From these two opposite forms of Ebionism, which may be succinctly denominated the Pharisaic and the Essenian,† there would arise two opposite ways of contemplating the gospel history. While one sought to get rid of all gleams and glimpses of the supernatural in the history of Christ's childhood, and whatever favoured the recognition of a higher nature and dignity in Him, the other endeavoured to expunge everything which represented him as the son of David,—the David in fulness and perfection of earthly glory.‡ While the great mass of the carnal-minded Jews were unwilling to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah, because they did not find realized in him every feature of the Messiah's image as presented by the

\* Hom. III. c. 22, 23, &c., where the contrast between true and false prophets is seized with reference to this point.

† In employing this term, however, I would not be understood as maintaining that this particular shape of Ebionism proceeded directly from the Essenes; I merely regard Essenism as being only one particular manifestation of a religious bent of mind which extended still farther. See p. 59.

‡ The author of the Clementines probably belonged to that class of the Ebionites who acknowledged the supernatural birth of Christ: for in opposing those who acknowledged the prophets of the Old Testament, but did not reckon Adam as a prophet, he says (Hom. III. c. 20), "If one cannot discern the holy spirit of the Messiah in the man produced immediately by God's creative hand (τῷ ὑπὸ χεῖρὸς θεοῦ κτισθὲν ἀνθρώπῳ)

prophets : while Christian teachers, without distinguishing from their Christian one the peculiar positions which the prophets severally held in the development of the Theocracy, contrived by elaborately allegorizing to introduce the full development of Christianity into the prophets ; while the opponents of Judaism among the Gnostics laid hold of the difference between the appearance of Christ and the idea of the Messiah contained in the letter of the prophetic writings in order to prove an absolute opposition betwixt Judaism and Christianity — the author of the Clementines opposed to all another view of the idea of inspiration and of the prophetic gift, by which, while the divine character of the Mosaic religion was upheld, the writings of the prophets were represented as not belonging to its progressive completion, but as something wholly alien from it. He perhaps had adopted a view existing among the Jews which exalted Moses far above the prophets, and which made the prophetic writings, to say the least, to be greatly inferior to the Pentateuch.\*

This view of the corruption of the original truth in the records of revelation, by the admixture of foreign elements, stands connected with a remarkable idea of the process of development in religious faith, and of the law observed in the divine revelations to man. That admixture was designed, for instance, for the special purpose of trying the godlike temper of man. The consciousness of the divine love of God ought to be so strong in the truly pious as to be able to reject at once

ἀνθρώπων), πῶς ἐπὶ τινὶ ἐκ μυσαρῶν σταγόνος γεγενημένῳ διδοῦς ἔχειν, οὐ τὰ μέγιστα ἀσεβῆ;" It seems implied here that in the last form of manifestation of the Adam-spirit there must have been something analogous to the immediate exercise of God's creative power, as contradistinguished from ordinary birth, ἐκ μυσαρῶν σταγόνος (the way in which the false prophets came into existence). It is true, the question arises in such a case, how he represented to himself the birth of others, whom he regarded no less as forms of manifestation of the primal spirit.

\* Epiphanius speaks of an Ebionite party who received the Pentateuch alone as the divine book of the Old Testament (though they did not admit the authority even of this in its whole extent), and who acknowledged Christ alone as a true prophet, and represented the prophets of the Old Testament as prophets endowed merely with human insight, συνέσεις προφῆτας, καὶ οὐκ ἀληθείας. Hæres. 30, c. 15 et 18. A similar depreciation of the prophets, springing out of some such Ebionitic principle, we find described by Methodius, who wrote in the beginning of the fourth century: Ἐξ ἰδίας κινήσεως τοὺς προφῆτας λειλαληκέναι. In Combefis. bibliothecæ græcor. patr. auctarium novissimum, Pars I. f. 113. Paris, 1672.



as spurious all those declarations at variance with it which had become incorporated in the records of religion. The criterion accordingly must lie in the disposition; everything must depend on cherishing the disposition in which genuine faith had once become rooted.\* “The Holy Scriptures do not lead men into error, they only cause the hidden disposition of every one to manifest itself. Thus each man finds in the Holy Scriptures such a God as he would have Him to be.”† In another recension of this work, the *Recognitions of Clement*, which are known to us only in the version of Rufinus, this idea is also applied to God’s mode of revealing himself in the works of nature and in the entire life of humanity; “that which leads to faith in a divine providence being everywhere accompanied by something which suggests a doubt.”‡ It is interesting to observe how the author of the *Clementines* was led by his peculiar cosmological and theological system to express, for the first time, that great and fruitful idea which from a very different point of view the profound Pascal has so beautifully unfolded in his apologetic “*Thoughts* ;”—the idea in which the various difficulties in the way of religious faith first meet their solution, and which points to the true connection between believing piety and liberal science.

Strongly as the conception of outward revelation and the authority of a true prophet is insisted on in the *Clementines*, no less careful, as our previous remarks prove, is the author of this work against giving a one-sided *outwardness* to the supernaturalist principle. The universal revelation which proceeded from Adam is—as we see—at the same time, an inward one in the conscience. Every new revelation, by which the earlier one is to be restored to its original purity, is adapted to the inward susceptibility, the inner consciousness of God and of truth. The good man dares to believe nothing, on whatever authority it may come, that stands in contradiction with God (the general idea of God) and with God’s creation. The

\* As to the end which the introduction of those false declarations (τῶν βλασφημῶν περικοπτῶν) was to subserve, the *Homilies* say, *Τούτο γίγονεν λόγῳ καὶ κρίσει, ὅπως ἐλεγχθῶσιν, τίνες τολμῶσιν τὰ κατὰ τὸν Θεὸν γραφέντα φιληκόςως ἔχειν, τίνες τε στοργῇ τῇ πρὸς αὐτὸν τὰ κατ’ αὐτοῦ λεγόμενα μὴ μόνον ἀπιστεῖν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν ἀρχὴν ἀκούειν ἀνέχισθαι.* Hom. II. c. 38.

† Hom. XVI. c. 10.

‡ Nihil omnino est, quod fidem providentiæ faciat, et non habeat e contrario aliud ad infidelitatem paratum. *Recognition. l. VIII. c. 53.*

Godly nature is the medium where the inner revelation of God comes to pass. In the truth implanted by God in the depths of the human mind all other truth is contained; the revelation of the Divine Spirit does but awaken the consciousness to it.\* This revelation of God from within is something higher and more trustworthy than any revelation by visions and dreams, which must always remain external to the man, and presupposes in him an estrangement from God, that He must stand to him in so outward a relation.†

According to the doctrine of this work, then, the first Father of the human race was by love of his children, dispersed throughout the world, moved to appear once more on the earth in the person of Jesus, for the purpose of purifying the original religion from the additions which had distorted it. This end of his appearing is indicated by himself, when he says, Matth. v. 17, "Think not I am come to destroy the law,‡ but to fulfil." What he has destroyed, then, cannot possibly belong to that which he calls the law, the primary religion.§ But especially he appeared for the purpose of extending his blessings to his other children, the Gentiles, by communicating to them also that pure, primitive religion which had been constantly handed down by a consecrated few among the *Jewish people*.|| The doctrine of Christ, therefore, is perfectly identical with the pure and original doctrine of Moses. The Jewish mystic, the Essenian, or any one else of that class, who embraced Christianity, had not to adopt a new doctrine. The doctrine of Christ was for him but a confirmation of his earlier religious theory; he only rejoiced to see that secret doctrine now made the common property of all mankind—a thing which before had seemed to him impossible. In Jesus he witnessed a new manifestation of that Adam whom he had constantly revered as the source of all that is true and godlike in humanity. "The Father alone could so love his own children as Jesus loved men. What grieved him most was that in their ignorance those fought against him

\* 'Εν τῇ ἐν ἡμῖν ἐκ Θεοῦ τεθείσῃ σπερματικῷ; πᾶσα ἔνεστιν ἡ ἀλήθεια, Θεοῦ δὲ χεῖρὶ σκέπεται καὶ ἀποκαλύπτεται.

† Hom. XVII. s. 18: Τὰ τῆς ὁργῆς δι' ὀραμάτων καὶ ἐνυπνίων, τὰ δὲ πρὸς φίλον στόμα κατὰ στόμα.

‡ The words "τοὺς προφῆτας;" are arbitrarily omitted by the author because he did not recognise the prophets. § Hom. III. s. 51.

|| Τὰ ἀπ' αἰῶνος ἐν κρυπτῷ ἀξίους παραδιδόμενα κηρύσσων.



for whom as his children he was fighting ; and yet he loved them that hated him, yet he wept over the disobedient, yet he blessed them that blasphemed him, yet he prayed for his enemies ; and these things he not only did *himself*, as a father, but also taught his disciples to do the same to all men as their brethren.”\*

Hence, then, the inference, “ that the same primal religion is to be found in the pure doctrine of Moses, and in Christianity : he who has the one may do very well without the other, provided only that the Jew does not blaspheme *Christ*, whom he knows not. nor the *Christian*, Moses, whom he knows not. But he who has been counted worthy of knowing both, and of seeing in the doctrines announced by both but one and the same truth, is to be esteemed as a man rich in God—one who has found in the old that which has become new, and in the new that which is old—an allusion, doubtless, to the passage in Matth. xiii. 52.† The Jew and the Christian owe it entirely to the grace of God that they have been led by these revelations of the primal man—repeated under different forms, one in Moses, another in Christ—to the knowledge of the Divine will. And having obtained this without any labour of their own, it now depends on themselves to carry out in their conduct all that is prescribed by Moses or by Christ. It is in this way, too, they entitle themselves to a reward.”

If now, after this exposition of his system, we must recognise in the author of the Clementines the representative of some Jewish doctrine, peculiarly modified by a way of thinking closely allied to Essenism, in which the *work* of Christ is not prominently set forth as the main point, but He is considered simply in the light of a teacher and lawgiver—the revealer of the truth which had been previously taught and transmitted as a secret doctrine—we shall discern the relation, or rather opposition in which he must have stood to the teachings of the Apostle St. Paul. The Jewish principle, apprehended in this exclusive and one-sided manner, was wont to assume a peculiar hostility to this apostle ; we may therefore expect to find the same hostile relation in the present case. It is true

\* Hom. III. s. 19.

† Hom. VIII. s. 7 : Πλὴν ἢ τις καταξιοῦσθαι τοὺς ἀμφοτέρους ἐπιγινῶναι, ὡς μῖα διδασκαλία ὑπ’ αὐτῶν κεκηρυγμένη, αὐτὸς ἀνὴρ ἐν Θεῷ πλούσιος κατηρτίσθηται, τὰ τε ἀρχαῖα νέα τῷ χρόνῳ καὶ τὰ καινὰ παλαιὰ νινοσηκῶς.

St. Paul is nowhere mentioned by name; but the author may have had his reasons for preferring to attack the principles of the apostle, without introducing his name. And this is the course actually taken in the pseudo-epistle of Peter to James, prefixed to the Clementines;\* where, by the unnamed enemy who had falsified the doctrine preached by St. Peter in harmony with the Mosaic law, no other person than St. Paul can be meant.† If the author of the Clementines wished to carry out the idea of his work consistently, he could not allow that anything was to be seen in the present but the germ of the future; and was therefore obliged to represent *those* tendencies of his own time, which he really meant to combat, though he did not speak of them by name, as having been previously attacked in their principle by the Apostle St. Peter. Accordingly, while he assails several of the tendencies, such as Gnosticism, perhaps also Montanism, which first began to expand themselves in the second century, he transfers them all to the contemporary of the Apostle St. Peter, Simon Magus, who in the opinion of the first centuries was very generally regarded as the representative and forerunner of all the heretical tendencies of later times. As with this author St. Peter is the representative of the pure doctrine of revelation, so in his view everything met together in the person of Simon Magus to complete an image of all erroneous tendencies, so blended together that the relations of the individual phenomena of later times cannot be distinguished with certainty. In the mind of the author, the Pauline doctrine of the relation of the gospel to the law belonged, without

\* This work did not perhaps proceed from the same author as the Clementines. We might infer this from the fact that it differs from the Clementines in the view it takes of the Old Testament prophets, inasmuch as their divine authority is presupposed; only the necessity of a key to the right understanding of them is argued from the ambiguity of their language.

† It is evident that St. Peter is here made to allude to what is related in the epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians when he says, "I see already the beginning of the evil: for some of the Gentiles have rejected the doctrines taught by me, which are in harmony with the law, having adopted an anti-legal and fabulous doctrine from the man who is my enemy (τοῦ ἐχθροῦ ἀνθρώπου ἁνομίαν τινα καὶ φλυαρώδη προσηκόμενοι διδασκαλίαν). Nay, some have attempted, even during my lifetime, to wrest my words, by various false interpretations, to the subversion of the law, as if I also were really, though I did not openly express it, of the same opinion."



doubt, to the number of these. And the remark is, in all probability, aimed against the apostle, when St. Peter says to Simon Magus, "Why should Christ have remained with his disciples and instructed them a whole year,\* if it were possible for one to be made a teacher at once by a vision? If, however, thou hast been made an apostle after having been instructed by him in a brief and momentary manifestation, then preach his words, love his apostles, and fight not against me, who have lived in his society."† There appears also to be some allusion to that reaction of the Judaizing Christianity against the Pauline type of doctrine, which took place at the close of the age of St. Paul, when St. Peter is made to lay it down as a law that, as the appearance of falsehood must uniformly precede the revelation of truth (Simon Magus having preceded St. Peter), so the false gospel must first be spread by a teacher of error (St. Paul), and then, after the destruction of the temple, for the correction of subsequent heresies the true gospel must be secretly disseminated (in accordance with that taste for mystery which characterised a tendency so closely allied to Essenism);‡ and so likewise, at the end of all, the Antichrist would precede the appearance of Christ.

When the Christian church had once firmly established

\* A supposition of which we find many traces even in writers of the first century, and which might have easily originated in the unchronological exhibition of the gospel history, as we find it in those evangelists who followed a synoptical method of arrangement. Had the author known, however, from the gospel of St. John that the ministry of Christ lasted *several years*, he would assuredly, as he had special good reason for doing, have put *several years* instead of one. It is probable, therefore, that he made no use of John's gospel. Yet there are in the Clementines declarations of Christ which bear a close resemblance to the peculiar type of his discourses which are given in this gospel, and which so nearly resemble the particular sayings of Christ, which are nowhere to be met with but in this gospel, that we are struck with a general idea of their identity. We must, then, suppose either that these sayings came to the author's knowledge through some other collection or narrative drawn from St. John's gospel, or that he found in his *εὐαγγέλιον κατ' Ἑβραίου*; some such words of Christ taken from tradition, and which John has communicated in the original connection in which they were spoken. The latter appears the true state of the case, when we compare the form of these sayings, as they occur in the Clementines, with the form in which we find them in the gospel according to St. John.

† Hom. XVII. s. 19.

‡ Hom. II. c. 17: Πρῶτον ψευδὲς δεῖ ἰλθεῖν εὐαγγέλιον ὑπὸ πλάνου τινός, καὶ ἔθ' οὕτως, μετὰ καθαίρεισιν τοῦ ἀγίου τόπου, εὐαγγέλιον ἀληθὲς κρύψαι διαπεμφθῆναι.

itself among the Gentiles, it must no doubt have proved difficult for that rigid Ebionism which maintained the perpetual obligation of the Mosaic law, to make proselytes from that body. And yet, from the words of Justin Martyr which have been already given, it would seem that such attempts still continued to be made in his time, and not always without success. For he speaks of Gentile Christians, who had been induced to unite the observance of the Mosaic law with a belief in Christianity.\*

As, then, it would appear from our exposition of Ebionism that there were various grades of difference amongst those who were inclined to this way of thinking, so there were also such grades in the relation of the Gentile Christians to the Ebionites; from a mild moderation down to the most uncompromising opposition. In *these* diversities we meet once more with those various shades which had already begun to appear in the apostolic age. On both sides error could find room to grow up. A desire to reconcile the differences between Jewish and Gentile Christians might be seduced into yielding too much to the influence of the Jewish spirit; the more repulsive tendency might be carried away by ultra-Paulinism to break loose from all conformity with the other apostolical types of doctrine, and so might by degrees sink into Gnosticism. The more rigid of the Gentile Christians, who by no means followed the genuine principles of St. Paul, we find in those of whom Justin says that they pronounced the like

\* Justin's words are (l. c. f. 266), Τοὺς δὲ πειθομένους αὐτοῖς ἐπὶ τὴν ἔννομον πολιτείαν μετὰ τοῦ φυλάσσειν τὴν εἰς τὸν Χριστὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ ὁμολογίαν καὶ σωθήσεσθαι ἴσως ὑπολαμβάνω. In the view of the matter which we have given in the text, we take it for granted that the author is here speaking, not of Jews, but of Gentiles. On the other hand, Deacon C. Semisch, in his Monograph on Justin Martyr (Theil II. S. 236, Anm. 1), a work distinguished for profound, extensive, and candid inquiry, understands the author as alluding in this case to Jews. But since, in the preceding passage, those Jewish Christians were spoken of who were for constraining the Gentiles to observe the Mosaic law, I do not see how we can suppose that Jews are again meant by "those who followed them, and passed over to the observance of the law." The latter must necessarily be a different class from the former, and therefore Gentile Christians only can be meant. It is evident, moreover, that Justin does not express himself with the same mildness in speaking of the latter, as of the former; for with regard to one class he simply testifies his disapprobation, but of the others he says doubtfully, "he believes they would *perhaps* be saved."



sentence of condemnation on all who still observed the Mosaic law, even though they did not wish to obtrude it on the Gentile Christians; maintaining that they could not be saved, and renounced all Christian fellowship, and indeed all intercourse, with them.\* The *milder* tendency among the Gentile Christians, on the other hand, is presented to us in Justin Martyr himself. He is ready to extend the right hand of fellowship to those Jewish Christians who, although they observed the Mosaic law themselves, had no wish to oblige the Gentiles to do the same. He could show indulgence to the weakness of a subordinate position,† such as could not fail to arise in the compromise between Judaism and Gentilism, and was able to distinguish an inferior and still defective stage of Christian knowledge from the heretical element. But even on those Jewish Christians who, while they maintained the *absolute* obligation of the Mosaic law, yet united with it faith in Christ, he pronounced no sentence of condemnation, excluding them from salvation; he was content simply to declare that he could not agree with them. And, what is still more, he does not venture to exclude from the hope of salvation even the Gentile Christians who had allowed themselves to be drawn away, by the deceptive representations of Judaizing proselyte-makers, to adopt the Mosaic law; of these, though less excusable than those of Jewish origin, he says, they may perhaps be saved by their faith in Jesus as their Saviour. He invariably abides by the principle of the apostolic church, that faith in Jesus as the Messiah is the sole ground of salvation; and this faith he recognises even in the midst of the most defective Christian knowledge. So mildly did he judge of those who were still entangled in that error, although he must have known that they were far removed, not only in their views of the Mosaic law, but also in their opinion of the person of Christ, from what he saw was the Christian truth. He speaks expressly, also, of those who looked upon Christ merely as a man born of men,‡ and,

\* Μηδὲ κοινωνεῖν ὁμιλίας ἢ ἐστίας τοῖς τοιοῦτοις τολμῶντες.

† Διὰ τοῦ ἀσθενεῖς τῆς γνώμης, as he expresses it.

‡ Ed. Colon. f. 267. Those whom he has particularly in view here are, without doubt, the Ebionites, although other Christians of similar views may also be meant, if the reading of the manuscript is correct: "Τινὲς ἀπὸ τοῦ ἡμετέρου γένους." Yet, when we consider that the phrase "ὁμέτερον γένος" is a designation of the Jews, and that just before it was

without adding any harsher word, he simply says he does not agree with them,\* because he held only to the doctrine of Christ and of the prophets. He was under the necessity of speaking with more severity of the Gnostics, since these, as will hereafter be shown, falsified the fundamental doctrine of Christ as historically portrayed.

This mild tone in judging of the Ebionites by no means warrants us in supposing that Justin himself was inclined to their way of thinking.† The very way in which he expresses himself with regard to the Judaizing Christians, as parties with whom he had no sympathy, is sufficient evidence to the contrary, as well as the Pauline element so strongly noticeable in his theology.‡ Indeed, how could that man be inclined to Ebionism, who could assert that more genuine Christians had sprung from the midst of the Gentiles than from the midst of the Jews § —who gave it to be understood that the true and complete understanding of Christianity must first proceed from the Gentiles?

Such mildness in judging the different forms of the development of Christianity did not, indeed, long continue. It is only among the Alexandrian church-teachers that traces of such mildness again appear; and indeed this phenomenon was closely connected with their whole mental tendency, which we shall hereafter describe. Thus Origen || again recognises in these Ebionites weaker brethren, whom, however, Christ did

observed that the doctrine of a preëxisting divine nature in the Messiah was one peculiarly foreign to *those of their race*, viz. the *Jewish*, we might be led to conjecture that Justin had expressed himself thus: "Hence there are many of your race (of Jewish descent) who do indeed acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah, but hold him to be a mere man." We do not venture, however, to pronounce the reading "*ὑμετέρου*" to be the one necessarily required by the context.

\* *Οἱ οὐ συντίθεμαι.*

† As is maintained by many in modern times. For the history of this opinion, and also a thorough refutation of it, consult the above-cited work of Semisch (Th. II. p. 233).

‡ That he never quotes St. Paul by name can be no evidence to the contrary; still we are not inclined, with Semisch, to account for this silence on the ground that the Dialogue cum Tryphone was expressly written with reference to the Jews. We also find elements in the same work derived from the Apostle St. John, although he is nowhere named; and in general, with the exception of the scriptures of the Old Testament, no sacred writing is cited by name except the Acts of the Apostles.

§ See above, p. 87.

|| Matth. T. XVI. c. 12.



not reject; for even to them he was the Me-siah, from whom alone they expected help, although in him they acknowledged only the Son of David and not the Son of God. In his beautiful allegorical exposition of the story of Bartimeus (Mark x. 46) he makes the blind man who calls upon Jesus to be the Ebionite, and the many who bid him to be silent the *believers* from among the Gentiles, who for the most part have higher views of the person of Jesus. "But," he continues, "although the many bid him be silent, he cries still the more, because he believes in Jesus, although he believes on him rather after the human manner,\* saying, Son of David, have mercy on me." †

From Ebionism, however, we must distinguish ‡ certain elements, which, possessing some affinity with Ebionism, involve nevertheless a grossly material view of Christianity, since, adhering to the sensuous envelope of the letter, they failed to penetrate its spirit. Such, for example, was that materialist element of the religious spirit, in affinity with the Jewish point of view, which betrayed itself, in the anthropomorphism and anthropopathism of the doctrine concerning God—in the low, worldly views of the kingdom to be founded by Christ on earth which are to be found in Chiliasm. A tendency of this kind might easily form itself even in Gentilism, since in the sensuous element of the general enlightenment of the day it found much to which it could attach itself; and such would, of itself, stand forth as the first stage of evolution, until the influence of Christianity, like the leaven, had more fully penetrated the whole way of thinking. Although it is among the Jewish Christians that we find the first traces of an intermixture of the theocratic principles of the Old and New Testaments, and the consequent transference of the Old Testament priesthood into the Christian church, § yet it by no means follows that this corruption of the great Christian principle of which we have

\* Πιστεύων μὲν ἐπὶ τὸν Ἰησοῦν, ἀνθρωπικώτερον δὲ πιστεύων.

† Οἵτινες παρ' ὀλίγους ἅπαντες πεπιστεύκασιν αὐτὸν ἐκ παρθένου γεγενῆσθαι. This theory, in the germ, is to be found in Clement of Alexandria: Οἱ μὲν πολλοὶ οὕτως Δαβὶδ ἐλέησάν με ἔλεγον, ὀλίγοι δὲ οὖν ἐγίνωσκον τοῦ Θεοῦ. Strom. I. VI. f. 680.

‡ The neglect of this distinction, and the too indiscriminate application of the term Ebionism, have, in recent times, given occasion to many arbitrary historical combinations and hypotheses.

§ On this ground we find asserted already (in Testament. IV. of Judas, c. 21) Hildebrand's principle of the subordination of the kingdom to the priesthood: Ὡς ὑπερέχει οὐρανὸς τῆς γῆς, οὕτως ὑπερέχει Θεοῦ ἰσχυρεῖα τῆς ἐπὶ γῆς βασιλείας.

already spoken in the history of the constitution of the church, is in every case to be traced ultimately to such a source. For the Roman church is an instance of the contrary: here, though the development of the Christian life originally proceeded from a Pauline, Gentile-Christian principle,\* yet afterwards, through an outward and formal notion of the church finding a point of attachment in the political element of the Roman spirit, room was made for the reaction of the Jewish element that had been vanquished by St. Paul.

This new intermixture of Jewish and Christian principles contributed to call forth the reaction of the opposite mental tendency, which, in its great features, has been already described in the Introduction—we mean the Gnostic tendency—which ultimately would lead to a total separation of Christianity even from its organic connection with Judaism. But Gnosticism is but one link of a great series of phenomena, such as occur in the history of the world only at rare and distant intervals, and which, in this period, originated in the vast interchange of ideas between distant nations which this age witnessed in the contact of the East with the West, and the consequent intermingling of the oriental and the occidental mind.

In this series of facts we see how Christianity announces itself to the East and to the West as a new power in the history of the world; how oriental and occidental minds are attracted by it; and how, under the influence of Christianity, peculiar combinations of both are formed—a proof of the mighty influence with which it begins to operate on the mental life of Eastern and Western nations. A transient, though stupendous phenomenon indeed, but a token of the enduring influence which Christianity was to produce in the more distant times of futurity. This series of phenomena we propose more distinctly to consider in our next volume.

\* See the evidence in favour of this origin of the Roman church in my *Apostol. Zeitalter*, Bd. I. S. 384 ff. We shall return to the subject once more in another connection.

END OF VOL. I.



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